

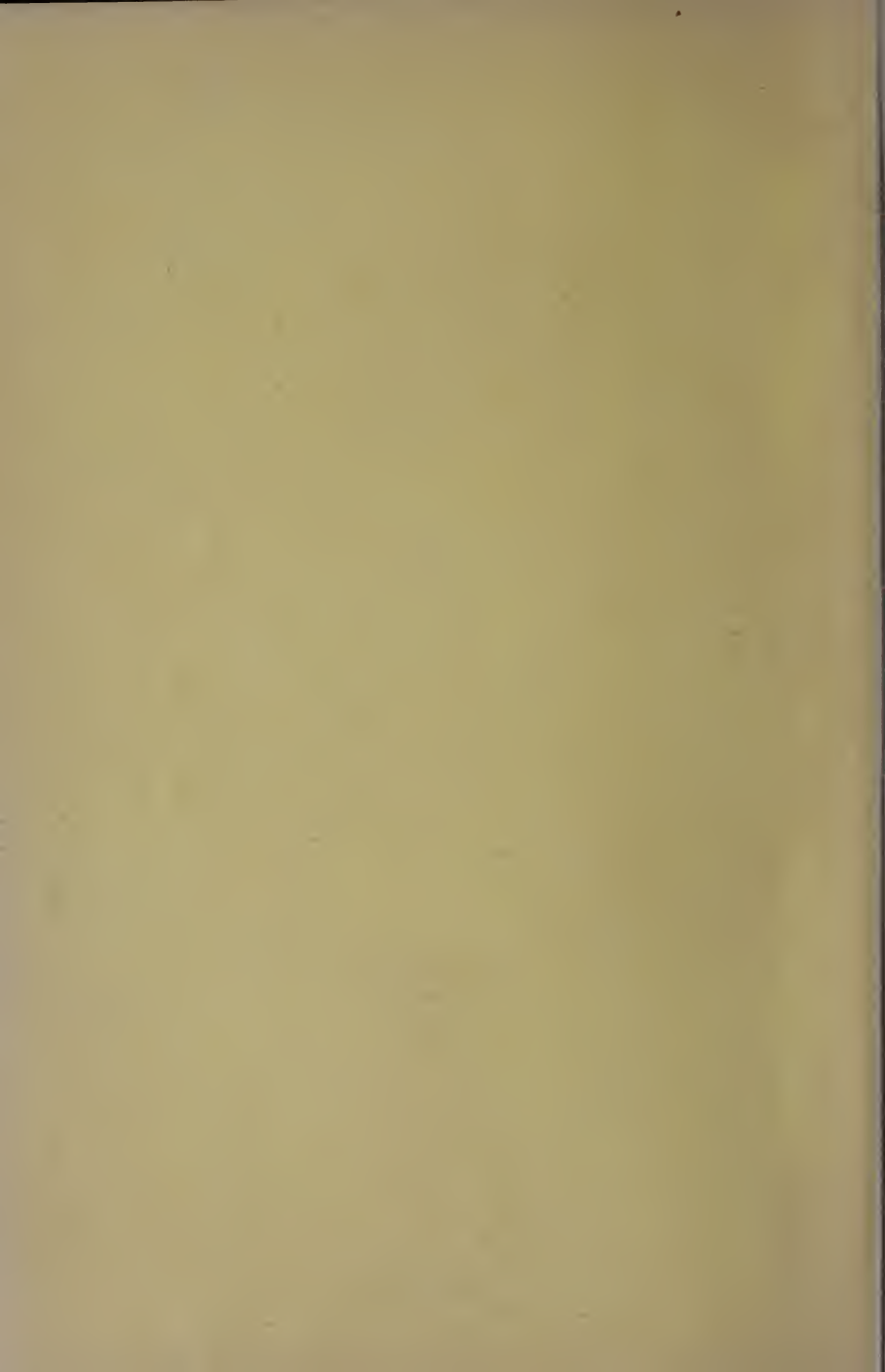


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FIGHT WITH THE GRISLY BEARS. Page 211.

THE
BACKWOODSMAN;

OR,

Life on the Indian Frontier.

EDITED BY

SIR C. F. LASCELLES WRAXALL, BART.,

AUTHOR OF "THE BLACK PANTHER," ETC.

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY LOUIS GUARD,
ENGRAVED BY JOHN ANDREW.*

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THE BACKWOODSMAN.

CHAPTER I.

MY SETTLEMENT.

MY blockhouse was built at the foot of the mountain-chain of the Rio Grande, on the precipitous banks of the River Leone. On three sides it was surrounded by a fourteen-foot stockade of split trees standing perpendicularly. At the two front corners of the palisade were small turrets of the same material, whence the face of the wall could be held under fire in the event of an attack from hostile Indians. On the south side of the river stretched out illimitable prairies, while the northern side was covered with the densest virgin forest for many miles. To the north and west I had no civilized neighbors at all; while to the south and east the nearest settlement was at least two hundred and fifty miles distant. My small garrison consisted of three men, who, whenever I was absent, defended the fort, and at other times looked after the small field and garden as well as the cattle.

As I had exclusively undertaken to provide my colony with meat, I rarely staid at home, except when there was some pressing field work to be done. Each dawn saw me leave the fort with my faithful dog Trusty, and turn my

horse either toward the boundless prairie or the mountains of the Rio Grande.

Very often hunting kept me away from home for several days, in which case I used to bivouac in the tall grass by the side of some stream. Such oases, though not frequent, are found here and there on the prairies of the far West. One of these favorite spots of mine lay near the mountains, about ten miles from my abode. It was almost the only water far and wide, and here formed two ponds, whose depths I was never able to sound, although I lowered large stones fastened to upwards of a hundred yards of lasso. The small space between the two ponds was overshadowed by the most splendid magnolias, pecan-nut-trees, yuccas, evergreen oaks, &c., and begirt by a wall of cactuses, aloes, and other prickly plants. I often selected this place for hunting, because it always offered a large quantity of game of every description, and I was certain at any time of finding near this water hundreds of wild turkeys, which constitute a great dainty in the bill of fare of the solitary hunter.

After a very hot spring day I had sought the ponds, as it was too late to ride home. The night was glorious; the magnolias and large-flowered cactuses diffused their vanilla perfume over me; and thousands of insects sported round my small camp-fire.

My dog and horse played around me for a long time, until, quite tired, they lay down by the fire-side, and all three of us slept till dawn, when the gobbling of the turkeys aroused us. The morning was as lovely as the night. I freshened up the fire, boiled some coffee, roasted the breast of a turkey, into which I had previously rubbed pepper and salt, and finished breakfast with Trusty, while Czar, my famous white stallion, was greedily browsing on the damp

grass, and turned his head away when I went up to him with the bridle. I hung up the rest of the turkey, as well as another I had shot on the previous evening, and a leg of deer meat, in the shadow of a magnolia, — as I did not know whether I might not return to the spot that evening, — saddled, and we were soon under way for the mountains, where I hoped to find buffalo.

I was riding slowly along a hollow in the prairie, when a rapidly approaching sound attracted my attention. In a few minutes, a very old buffalo, covered with foam, dashed past me, and almost at the same moment a Comanche Indian pulled up his horse on the rising ground about fifty yards from me. As he had his bow ready to shoot the buffalo, the savage made his declaration of war more quickly than I, and his first arrow passed through my game-bag sling, leather jacket and waistcoat, to my right breast, while two others whizzed past my ear. To pluck out the arrow, seize a revolver, and dig the spurs into my horse, were but one operation; and a second later saw me within twenty yards of the redskin, who had turned his horse round, and was seeking safety in flight. After a chase of about two miles over awfully rough ground, where the slightest 'mistake might have broken my neck, the Indian's horse began to be winded, while Czar still held his head and tail erect. I rapidly drew nearer, in spite of the terrible blows the redskin dealt his horse, and when about thirty paces behind the foe, I turned slightly to the left, in order, if I could, to avoid wounding his horse by my shot. I raised my revolver and fired; but at the same instant the Indian disappeared from sight, with the exception of his left foot, with which he held on to the saddle, while the rest of his body was suspended on the side away from me. With the cessation of the blows, however, the speed of his horse relaxed,

*

and I was able to ride close up. Suddenly the Indian regained his seat, and urged on his horse with the whip; I fired and missed again, for I aimed too high, in my anxiety to spare the mustang. We went on thus at full gallop till we reached a very broad ravine, over which the Indian could not leap. He therefore dashed past my left hand, trying, at the same moment, to draw an arrow from the quiver over his left shoulder. I fired for the third time; with the shot, the Comanche sank back on his horse's croup, hung on with his feet, and went about a hundred yards farther, when he fell motionless in the tall grass. As he passed me, I had noticed that he was bleeding from the right chest and mouth, and was probably already gone to the happy hunting-grounds. I galloped after the mustang, which soon surrendered, though with much trembling, to the pale face; I fastened its bridle to my saddle-bow, led both horses into a neighboring thicket, and reloaded my revolver.

I remained for about half an hour in my hiding-place, whence I could survey the landscape around, but none of the Indian's comrades made their appearance, and I therefore rode up to him to take his weapons. He was dead. The bullet had passed through his chest. I took his bow, quiver, and buffalo-hide, and sought for the arrows he had shot at me as I rode back. I resolved to pass the night at the ponds, not only to rest my animals, but also to conceal myself from the Indians, who, I felt sure, were not far off. I was not alarmed about myself, but in the event of pursuit by superior numbers, I should have Trusty to protect, and might easily lose the mustang again.

I reached the springs without any impediment, turned my horses out to grass in the thicket, and rested myself in the cool shade of the trees hanging over the ponds. A

calm, starry night set in, and lighted me on my ride home, which I reached after midnight. The mustang became one of my best horses. It grew much stronger, as it was only four years old when I captured it; and after being fed for awhile on maize, acquired extraordinary powers of endurance.

CHAPTER II.

THE COMANCHES.

THE summer passed away in hunting, farm-work, building houses, and other business, and during this period I had frequently visited the ponds. One evening I rode to them again, in order to begin hunting from that point the next morning. If I shot buffaloes not too far from my house, I used to ride back, and at evening drive out with a two-wheeled cart, drawn by mules, to fetch the meat, and salt it for the probable event of a siege. As I always had an ample supply of other articles for my garrison and cattle, and as I had plenty of water, I could resist an Indian attack for a long time. Large herds of buffalo always appear in the neighborhood so soon as the vegetation on the Rocky Mountains begins to die out, and the cold sets in. For a week past, these wanderers had been moving southwards; but, though their appearance may be agreeable to the hunter in these parts, it reminds him, at the same time, that his perils are greatly increased by their advent. Numerous tribes of horse Indians always follow these herds to the better pasturage, and traverse the prairie in every direction, as they depend on the buffalo exclusively for food. The warmer climate during the winter also suits them better, as they more easily find forage for their large troops of horses and mules.

At a late hour I reached the ponds, after supplying myself *en route* with some fat venison. Before I lit my fire, I

also shot two turkeys on the neighboring trees, because at this season they are a great dainty, as they feed on the ripe oily pecan-nuts. I sat till late over my small fire, cut every now and then a slice from the meat roasting on a spit, and bade my dog be quiet, who would not lie down, but constantly sniffed about with his broad nose to the ground, and growling sullenly. Czar, on the contrary, felt very jolly: had abundant food in the prairie-grass, and snorted every now and then so lustily, that the old turkeys round us were startled from their sleep. It grew more and more quiet. Czar had lain down by my side; and only the unpleasant jeering too-whooot of the owl echoed through the night, and interrupted the monotonous chorus of the hunting wolves which never ceases in these parts. Trusty, my faithful watchman, was still sitting up with raised nose, when I sank back on my saddle, and fell asleep. The morning was breaking when I awoke, saturated with dew; but I sprang up, shook myself, made up the fire, put meat on the spit, and coffee to boil, and then leapt into the clear pond whose waters had so often refreshed me. After the bath I breakfasted, and it was not till I proceeded to saddle my horse that I noticed Trusty's great anxiety to call my attention to something. On following him, I found a great quantity of fresh Indian signs, and saw that a large number of horses had been grazing round the pond on the previous day. I examined my horse-gear and weapons, opened a package of cartridges for my double-barrelled rifle, and then rode in the direction of the Leone. I had scarce crossed the first upland and reached the prairie, when Czar made an attempt to bolt, and looked round with a snort. I at once noticed a swarm of Comanches about half a mile behind me, and coming up at full speed. There was not a moment to lose in forming a resolution: I must either fly or return to my

natural fortress at the springs. I decided on the latter course, as my enemies were already too near for my dog to reach the thicket or the Leone before them ; for, though the brave creature was remarkably powerful and swift-footed, he could not beat good horses in a long race.

I therefore turned Czar round, and flew back to the ponds. A narrow path, which I had cut on my first visit, through a wall of prickly plants led to the shady spot between the two ponds, which, on the opposite side, were joined by a broad swamp ; so that I had only this narrow entrance to defend. The thicket soon received us. Czar was fastened by the bridle to a wild grape-vine ; my long holster-pistols were thrust into the front of my hunting-shirt ; the belt that held my revolvers was unbuckled, and I was ready for the attack of the savages. Trusty, too, had put up the stiff hair on his back, and by his growling showed that he was equally ready to do his part in the fight. The Indians had come within a few hundred yards, and were now circling round me with their frightful war-yell, swinging their buffalo-hides over their heads, and trying, by the strangest sounds and gestures, either to startle my horse or terrify me. I do not deny that, although used to such scenes, I felt an icy coldness down my back, at the sight of these demons, and involuntarily thought of the operation of scalp-ing. I remained as quiet as I could, however, and resolved not to expend a bullet in vain. The distance was gradually reduced, and the savages came within about a hundred and fifty yards, some even nearer. The boldest came within a hundred and twenty yards of me, while the others shot some dozen arrows at me, some of which wounded the sappy cactuses around me. The savages continually grew bolder, and it was time to open the ball ; for attacking is half the battle when engaged with Indians.

I therefore aimed at the nearest man, — a powerful, stout, rather elderly savage, mounted on a very fast golden-brown stallion, — and at once saw that the bullet struck him : in his fall he pulled his horse round towards me, and dashed past within forty yards, which enabled me to see that the bullet had passed through his body, and he did not need a second. About one hundred yards farther on he kissed the ground. After the shot, the band dashed off, and their yell was augmented to a roar, more like that of a wounded buffalo than human voices. They assembled about half a mile distant, held a short consultation, and then returned like a whirlwind towards me, with renewed yells. The attack was now seriously meant, although the sole peril I incurred was from arrows shot close to me. I led Czar a few paces in the rear, behind a widely spreading yucca, ordered Trusty to lie down under the cactuses, reloaded my gun, and, being a bit of Indian myself, I disappeared among the huge aloes in front of me, pulling my stout beaver hat over my eyes. I allowed the tornado to come within a hundred and sixty paces, when I raised my good rifle between the aloes, pulled the trigger, and saw through the smoke, a redskin bound in the air, and fall among the horses' hoofs. A dense dust concealed the band from sight ; but a repetition of the yells reached my ear, and I soon saw the savages going away from me ; whereon I gave them the contents of the second barrel, which had a good effect, in spite of the distance, as I recognized in the fresh yells raised, and the dispersion of the band. The Indians, ere long, halted a long way off ; but after a while continued their retreat. I understood these movements perfectly well : they wanted to give me time to leave my hiding-place, and then ride me down on the plain. Hence I waited till the Comanches were nearly two miles off, and

watched them through my glass as they halted from time to time, and looked round at me. I was certain that we now had a sufficient start to reach the forest on the Leone without risk. My rifle was reloaded, and my pistols were placed in the holsters. I stepped out of my hiding-place, and mounted my horse, which bore me at a rapid pace towards my home. The enemy scarce noticed my flight ere they dashed down from the heights after me like a storm-cloud. I did not hurry, however, for fear of fatiguing Trusty, but selected the buffalo-paths corresponding with my direction, (thousands of which intersect the prairies like a net); and at the end of the first mile felt convinced that we should reach the forest all right, which now rose more distinctly out of the sea of grass. So it was: we dashed into the first bushes only pursued by five Indians, where I rode behind some dwarf chestnuts, dismounted, and prepared to receive my enemies. They remained out of range, however, and in a short time retired again.

CHAPTER III.

A FIGHT WITH THE WEICOS.

As I mentioned, my fort stood on the south side of the Leone river, and in front of it lay one of the richest and most fertile prairies, which ran to the bank of Mustang Creek, a small stream running parallel to the Leone. The prairie between the Leone and this stream was about five miles broad ; and often, when I had spent the day at home, I rode off to pass the night there, in order to shoot at day-break as much game as my horse could comfortably carry, and be back to breakfast. I had found, in a coppice close to the stream, a small grassy clearing, where Czar was always comfortable. Around it stood colossal primæval oaks and magnolias, in whose shade many varieties of evergreen bushes formed an impenetrable thicket. In this thicket I had built a sort of hut of buffalo hides, in which I hid away a frying-pan, an old axe, and a coffee-pot. At this spot I passed many a hot summer night, for I found there a cool, quiet bed, which the sun never reached, and ran no risk of being betrayed by my camp-fire and disturbed by the Indians.

After one of these hot days, I rode Czar out of the fort, and Trusty, released from the chain, sprang joyfully at my horse's head, delighted at getting into the open country again. We went slowly towards the thickly-wooded bank of the creek, which bordered the prairie ahead of us like a purple strip, through large gay fields of flowers, with

which the prairie is adorned. Wherever the eye turned, it fell on herds of deer that were sheltering themselves from the burning sun under isolated elms. As I rode along, my eye was certainly rejoiced by this abundance of game, but I did not change my direction on that account, because I was not at any great distance from the thickets in advance of the forest on Mustang Creek, where I could approach the game with much less trouble.

I had hardly reached these advance woods, ere I saw a very large stag standing in the shadow of an old elm-tree, driving away the flies with its antlers, and feeding on the fine, sweet mosquito grass, which is much more tender in the shade than where it is exposed to the burning sunbeams. The beautiful creature was hardly sixty paces from me, and I seized my rifle, which was lying across the saddle in front of me. In a moment, Czar, who was well acquainted with this movement, halted, buried his small head in the grass, and began seeking the green young shoots which are covered by the dry withered stalks. I shot the deer, and as I saw that it could not go far, I allowed Trusty to catch it, which always afforded him great delight. I rode up, threw the bridle, before dismounting, over the end of a long pendant branch, and then dragged the deer into the shade to break it up, and cut off the meat I intended to take with me. I had knelt down by the deer, and just thrust in my bowie-knife, when Trusty, who was sitting not far from me, began growling, and on my inquiring what was the matter, growled still more loudly, while looking in the direction behind me. I knew the faithful creature so well that I only needed to look in his large eyes to read what he wished to tell me. They had turned red, a sure sign of his rising anger: but I believed that wolves were at hand, which were his most deadly enemies, because he had fared

badly from their claws now and then before I could get up to free him from his tormentors. I ordered Trusty to be quiet, as I heeded the dangers which had beset me for years much less than I had done at the beginning of my border-life, and bent down again over the deer, when Trusty sprang, with furious barks, towards the quarter where he had been looking. I quickly rose, and on turning round saw two perfectly naked Indians, armed with guns, leap out of the tall grass about sixty yards from me, and dash away like antelopes. My first step was to seize my rifle, which was leaning against the tree ; but the savages took an enormous bound over one of the clumps of plum-trees, and disappeared from sight. In a few minutes I had unfastened Czar, and rushed after the Indians through the many windings between the close-grown bushes. They had gained a great start, and had increased it by leaping over clumps, which I was compelled to ride round ; still I kept them pretty constantly in sight, and reached the open prairie in front of the creek at the moment when the savages had crossed about half of it. I gave Czar a slight touch of the spur, and urged him on with the usual pat on his powerful hard neck ; he leaped through the grass as if he hardly touched the ground, and I was obliged to set my hat tightly on my head for fear of losing it, for the pressure of the atmosphere was so great that I could hardly breathe.

The Indians ran like deer, but the distance between us was speedily lessened, and I was only sixty yards behind them, when they were still fifty from the forest. I stopped my horse, leaped off, aimed with my right-hand barrel at the savage farthest ahead, and dropped him. In the mean while the other Indian reached the skirt of the wood, and sprang into the shade of an old oak, at the moment when the head of my rifle covered him. I fired and saw him turn head

over heels. At this moment Trusty came panting over the prairie, who had remained behind as I had leapt over some clumps which he was obliged to skirt; he saw the first Indian leap out of the grass, like a hare which has been shot through the head, and his legs seemed too slow for his growing fury; a loud shout urged him on still more, and in a few seconds he and the savage disappeared in the tall grass. A frightfully shrill yell, which echoed far and wide through the forest, proved that the Indian was feeling Trusty's teeth, and the heaving grass over them showed that it was a struggle for life or death. Loading my rifle detained me for a few minutes at the spot whence I had fired; then I ran up to Czar, who had strayed a little distance, and rode to the battle-field. The contest was over; the savage was dead, and Trusty's handsome shaggy coat was spotted with blood. He was standing with his fore-paws on his enemy, and tearing out his throat. A dog like Trusty was invaluable to me, and for my own preservation I dared not assuage the creature's savageness; besides, the man was dead, and it was a matter of indifference whether the buzzards devoured his body or Trusty tore it piecemeal. In the mean while I fastened the dead man's short Mexican *escopeta*, hunting-pouch, and necklace to my saddle; then I called Trusty off, mounted Czar, and rode back to my deer, as I did not dare venture into the forest, where a large number of these Weicos were very probably lying in ambush. The two had come down from the mountains to the banks of Mustang Creek, whither the great quantity of game of all descriptions had attracted them; on hearing my shot, they crept up unnoticed, had got within distance of me, and in a few seconds would doubtless have settled me, had not my faithful watcher scented them, or remarked their movements in the grass.

On coming within sight of my deer, I saw that a dozen buzzards had collected, some on the trees, others circling slowly in the air, and watching with envious glances three wolves which had already begun greedily to share my deer. Although I hardly ever expended a bullet on these tormentors, I was annoyed at their impudence, for though they saw me coming, they did not interrupt their banquet. I shot one of them, a very old red she-wolf, took the loins and legs of the deer, hung them to my saddle, and rode home to pass the night.

My dogs inside the fort announced to the garrison the arrival of a stranger, and they were no little surprised to see me return at so unusual an hour. The gate was opened; and, after Czar had been relieved of his rather heavy burden, I led him once more into the grass to let him have a good roll; and, after he had been put into the stable with a feed of Indian corn, I described the events of the day at the supper-table. My news aroused the apprehensions of my men, for they knew the vengeful spirit of these Weicos, and we therefore resolved to keep watch during the night. We were still smoking and talking at midnight, when the dogs, of which I had fourteen, began making a tremendous row. They all ran out through the small apertures left for the purpose in the stockade, and stood barking on the river-bank at some foe on the other side, at the spot where my maize-field in the forest joined the river. It was a pitch-dark and calm night. We listened attentively, and could distinctly hear the trampling of dry brushwood in the field. It might be occasioned by buffalo, which had broken through the fence, and were regaling on my maize. But these animals rarely move at night, and there was a much greater probability of Indians being there. We gently opened the gate. I took my large duck gun, which held

sixteen pistol bullets in each barrel, and crawled down on my stomach to the river-bank, where I lay perfectly quiet. When I arrived there, one of my dogs was yelping; and I distinctly heard the twang of a bow-string. I noticed the quarter very carefully: the river was only forty yards across, and the direction was shown me still more plainly by the crackling of brushwood. I shot one barrel there, upon which human cries and a hurried flight were audible; then I sent the second after it, and fresh groans echoed through the quiet forest, and mingled with the roar of my two shots. I remained lying in the grass, as I might be easily seen against the starry sky from the other bank, which was thirty feet lower. The leaping and running through the maize retired farther and farther towards the wood, and scarce reached my ear, when suddenly a wild war-yell resounded in the forest, which was answered by countless wolf-howls on the prairie behind me. This was the last outbreak of fury on the part of the Indians, of whom I never saw any thing more beyond the various bloody traces which they left in the field. We found several arrows sticking in the river-bank, whose form led me to conclude that the assailants were Cato Indians. The damage I received from this nocturnal visit only consisted in the trampled maize and a harmless wound which one of my dogs had received from an arrow in the leg. The morning was spent in following the trail of the savages to the prairie on the other side of the forest, where a number of horses had awaited these night-wanderers, and borne them away. In the afternoon, I rode again to Mustang Creek with one of my people, to the spot where the second Indian had disappeared on the previous day. The entrance into the wood, and the roots of the old oak, were covered with blood. I sent Trusty on ahead to see whether the

road was clear, and if we could penetrate into the gloom of the forest without danger. We cautiously followed the dog, who kept the blood-marked trail, and reached the river, on whose bank the Weico was sleeping the last sleep. He was cold and stiff: my bullet had passed through his brown sides.

CHAPTER IV.

HUNTING ADVENTURES.

It is scarce possible to form an idea of the abundance of game with which the country near me was blessed in those days. I consumed a great quantity of meat in my household, owing to the number of dogs I kept; but I really procured it as if only amusing myself. There were certainly days on which I shot nothing. At times I did not get sight of a buffalo for a week, or the prairie-grass was burnt down to the roots, which rendered it extremely difficult to stalk the game, while just at this period, when the first green shoots spring up, the animals principally visit the open plains, whence they can see their pursuers for a long distance. For all that, though we had generally a superabundance of meat, and too often behaved with unpardonable extravagance, I have frequently killed five or six buffaloes, each weighing from a thousand to fifteen hundred pounds, in one chase, lasting perhaps half an hour, and then merely carried off their tongues and marrow-bones. Often, too, I have shot one or two bears, weighing from five to eight hundred pounds, and only taken home their paws and a few ribs, because the distance was too great to burden my horse with a large supply of meat. I could always supply our stock in the vicinity of my fort, although at times we were compelled to put up with turkeys, or fish and turtle, with which our river literally swarmed.

Bear-meat formed an important item in our larder ; or, more correctly speaking, bear's grease, which was of service in a great many ways.

These animals were very numerous in my neighborhood. In spring and summer they visited the woods, where with their cubs they regaled upon wild plums, grapes, honey, and young game of all sorts, and at times played the deuce in my maize-field. In autumn the rich crop of pecan-nuts, walnuts, acorns, chestnuts, and similar fruits, kept them in our forests ; and in winter they sought rocky ravines and caves, where they hybernated. Very many took up their quarters in old hollow trees, so that at this season I had hardly any difficulty in finding a bear in my neighborhood. Trusty was a first-rate hand at this, for he found a track, and kept to it as long as I pleased ; and at the same time possessed the great advantage that he never required a leash, never went farther than I ordered him, and never followed game without my permission. When a bear rose before me, it rarely got fifty paces away, unless it was in thorny bushes, where the dog could not escape its attack ; for, so soon as the bear bolted, Trusty dug his teeth so furiously into its legs, and slipped away with such agility, that the bear soon gave up all attempts at flight, and stood at bay. It was laughable to see the trouble the bear was in when I came up ; how it danced round Trusty, and with the most ridiculous *entrechats* upbraided his impudence ; while Trusty continually sprang away, lay down before Bruin, and made the woods ring with his bass voice. Frequently, however, the honest dog incurred great peril during this sport, and his life more than once depended on my opportune arrival.

In this way I followed, one warm autumn day, a remarkably broad bear-trail on the mountains of the Rio Grande.

Trusty, halting fifty yards ahead of me, showed me that it stopped at a small torrent, where the bear had watered on the previous night. I dismounted, examined the trail carefully, and saw that it was made by a very old fat bear: it was in the fatting season, when the bear frequently interrupts its sleep, and pays a nocturnal visit to the water. At this season these animals are very clumsy and slow, and cannot run far, as they soon grow scant of breath; they soon stop, and can be easily killed by the hunter, — always supposing that he can trust to his dog and horse, for any mistake might expose the rider to great danger. I ordered Trusty to follow the trail: it ran for some distance up the ravine, then went up the bare hill-side, which was covered with loose boulders and large masses of rock, into the valley on the opposite side, in the middle of which was a broad, but very swampy pool, girdled by thick thorny bushes. Trusty halted in front of this thicket, looked round to me, and then again at the bushes, while wagging his long tail. I knew the meaning of this signal, and that the bear was not far off. I ordered the dog on, and drew a revolver from my belt; feeling assured that the bear would soon leave the underwood, and seek safety in flight. Trusty disappeared in the bushes, and his powerful bark soon resounded through the narrow valley. It was an impossibility for me to ride through the thicket; hence I galloped to the end of the coppice, and saw there the bear going at a rapid pace up the opposite steep hill, with Trusty close at its heels. I tried to cross the swamp; but Czar retreated with a snort, as if to show me the danger of the enterprise. By this time, Trusty had caught up to the bear at the top of the hill, and furiously attacked it in the rear. The bear darted round with extraordinary agility, and was within an ace of seizing Trusty; but, after making a few springs at

the dog, it continued its hurried flight, and disappeared with Trusty over the hill-top. I had ridden farther up the water when I heard my dog baying: I drove the spurs into my horse, and, with one immense leap, we were both in the middle of the swamp up to the girths; then, with an indescribable effort, Czar gave three tremendous leaps, which sent black mud flying round us, and reached the opposite firm ground with his fore-feet, while his hind-quarters sunk in the quivering morass. With one spring I was over his head, when I sank in up to the knees, and, after several tremendous exertions, the noble fellow sprang ashore, trembling all over. Trusty's barking, as if for help, continually reached me as I galloped up the steep hill-side: I arrived on the summit at the moment when the bear sprang at Trusty, and buried him beneath its enormous weight. My alarm for the faithful dog — my best friend in these solitudes — made me urge Czar on: he bounded like a cat over the remaining rocks; and I saw Trusty slip out from under the bear in some miraculous way, and attack it again on the flank. I halted about ten paces from the scene of action, held my rifle between the little red fiery eyes of the bright black monster, and laid it lifeless on the bare rocks. The greatest peril for dogs is at the moment when the bear is shot; for they are apt to attack it as it falls, and get crushed in its last convulsive throes. I leapt off Czar, who was greatly excited by the sharp ride, went up to Trusty, who was venting his fury on Bruin's throat, examined him, and found that he had received three very serious wounds, two on the back and one over the left shoulder-blade, which were bleeding profusely, though in his fury he did not seem to notice them. I took my case from the holster, and sewed up his wounds, during which operation he lay very patiently before me, and looked at me with his large eyes as if ask-

ing whether this were necessary. Then I took off my jacket and set to work on the bear, stripped it, and put the hide as well as a hundred-pounds' weight of the flesh on Czar's back. If my readers will bear in mind that the sun was shining on my back furiously, and that I was on a bare blazing rock, they will understand that I was worn out, and longed for a cool resting-place. The bear weighed at least eight hundred pounds; and it requires a great effort to turn such an animal over.

I was a good hour's ride from the shade of the Leone, and only half that distance to the mountain springs I have already described. I therefore selected the latter, although they took me rather farther from home. I walked, although I made Czar carry my jacket, weapons, and pouch, and reached my destination in the afternoon, with my two faithful companions at my heels. Czar had a hearty meal after I had bathed him in the pond; and poor Trusty, whose wounds had dried in the sun, and pained him terribly, felt comfortable in the cool grass, and did not disturb the linen rag which I moistened every now and then. Nor did I forget myself: I rested, bathed, and, after a while, enjoyed the liver and tongue of the old vagabond, until the evening breeze had cooled the air; and I reached home partly on foot, partly on horseback.

I rode at daybreak down the river towards the mountains: a cold, refreshing breeze was blowing, which had an invigorating effect upon both men and animals. Czar was full of playfulness. He often pretended to kick at Trusty, his dearest friend, who was trotting by his side, shook his broad neck, and could hardly be held in. Trusty ran ahead, every now and then rolled in the tall grass, kicked up the earth behind him, and then looked up at me with a loud bark of delight. I, too, was in an excellent humor;

the small birds-of-paradise, with their long black-and-white tails and crimson breasts, fluttered from bush to bush. The humming-birds darted past me like live coals, and suddenly stopped as if spell-bound in front of some flowers, whence they sucked the honey for a few seconds with their beaks, and then hummed off to another fragrant blossom. Countless vultures described their regular circles over my head; above them gleamed against the ultramarine sky the brilliant white plumage of a silver heron, or the splendid pink of a flamingo; whilst high up in ether the royal eagles were bathing in the sunshine. The prairie was more beautiful this day than I had ever seen it; it was adorned by every designation of bulbous plants,—the prevailing flora in the spring.

Lost in admiration of these natural beauties, I reached the hilly ground near the mountain springs; and first learned from Czar's tugging at the bridle, and his repeated bounds, that I had come in sight of a herd of about forty buffaloes, that did not appear to notice me yet. Probably they were engaged with that portion of the beauties of nature which most interested them; for, at any rate, they all had their huge, shaggy heads buried in the fresh young grass. I was never better inclined to have a jolly chase than on this day, and the same was the case with Czar and Trusty. I let loose the reins, drew a revolver, and dashed among the astounded herd, looking for a plump bull. Surprised and disturbed, these philosophers turned their heads towards the mountains, raised their tails erect, and started in their awkward gallop, with the exception of one old fellow, the very one I had selected for the attack. He looked after the fugitives for a while, as if reproaching them with their cowardice; shook his wild shaggy mane several times; and then dashed furiously at me with his head down.

I was so surprised at this unexpected attack, that I did not fire, but turned my horse to fly. The buffalo pursued me some thousand yards, keeping rather close ; while his companions halted, and seemed to be admiring the chivalric deed of their knight. At length he stopped, as he had convinced himself that he could not catch up to me, and stamped with his long-haired front legs till the dust flew up in a cloud around him. I turned my horse, and raised my rifle, to make more sure of hitting the bull, as his determined conduct had imbued me with some degree of respect. I fired, and wounded him in the side, a little too far back : at the same instant he dashed ahead again ; but then thought better of it, and tried to rejoin the flying herd. I now set Trusty on him, who soon brought him at bay ; and I gave him a bullet from the revolver. Again he rushed at me, and again fled. In this way, pursuing and pursued in turn, I had given him five bullets, when he left the herd in a perfect state of mania, and dashed after me. I made a short turn with my horse ; the bull rushed past ; I turned Czar again towards the buffalo ; and, as I passed, I put a bullet through his heart at the distance of three yards. The monster fell to the ground in a cloud of dust, and raised up a heap of loose sand, which it stained with its dark blood.

To my surprise, I noticed that Trusty did not come up to the fallen buffalo, but rushed past it, loudly barking, to the thicket at the springs, whence I saw an immense panther leap through the prickly plants. I galloped round the ponds, and saw the royal brute making enormous leaps through the tall prairie-grass towards the mountains. Trusty was not idle either, and was close behind it. I spurred Czar, and kept rather nearer the mountains, so as to cut off the fugitive's retreat, and drive it farther out on



the plains, while my hunting-cry incessantly rang in its ears. It had galloped about a mile when we got rather close to it: it altered its course once more, and climbed up an old evergreen live-oak, among whose leafy branches it disappeared. I called Trusty to heel, stopped about fifty yards from the oak to reload my right-hand barrel, and then rode slowly round, looking for a gap in the foliage through which to catch a glimpse of this most dangerous animal. The leaves were very close; and I had ridden nearly round, when I suddenly saw its eyes glaring at me from one of the main branches in the middle of the tree. I must shoot it dead, or else it would be a very risky enterprise; and Czar's breathing was too violent for me to fire from his back with any certainty. I cautiously dismounted, keeping my eye on the panther, held a revolver in my left hand, brought the head of my rifle to bear right between the eyes of the king of these solitudes, — and fired. With a heavy bump, the panther fell from branch to branch, and lay motionless on the ground. I kept Trusty back, waited a few moments to see whether the jaguar was really dead, as I did not wish to injure the beautiful skin by a second bullet unnecessarily, then walked up, and found that the bullet had passed through the left eye into the brain. It had one of the handsomest skins I ever took: it is so large, that I can quite wrap myself up in it, and now forms my bed coverlet. When I had finished skinning it, and cut out the tusks with the small axe I always carried in a leathern case, I rode back to my buffalo, with the skin proudly hanging down on either side of my horse. On getting there, I led Czar through the narrow entrance into the thicket, where I came upon a freshly killed large deer, one of whose legs was half eaten away. It was the last meal of the savage beast of prey, and I was surprised it had left

its quarry. The noise of the buffalo and the horse galloping, Trusty's bass voice, and the crack of the revolver in such close vicinity, must have appeared dangerous to it; and it had fancied it could slip off unnoticed.

My buffalo was very plump; it supplied me and Trusty with an excellent dinner; and for dessert I had the marrow-bones roasted on the fire, and split open with my axe, which, when peppered and salted, are a great delicacy. A little old brandy from my flask, mixed with the cold spring-water, was a substitute for champagne: my sofa was the body of the deer, covered with the skin of its assassin.

CHAPTER V.

THE NATURALIST.

YEARS had passed since the first establishment of my settlement, but it was still the greatest rarity to see a strange white face among us; and, though I visited the nearest town more frequently than at the outset, it led to no settled intercourse. I rode there several times a year, taking to market on mules my stock of hides, wax, tallow, &c., and brought back provisions, tools, powder, and lead. On these occasions, I received the letters which had arrived for me in the interval, posted my own, took my packets of books forwarded from New York, and then my intercourse with the world was at an end for six months. The mules and horses certainly left traces during these rides in the clayey soil; but they were soon destroyed by heavy rains, or trampled by herds of passing buffaloes, and thus hidden from the most acute eyes. Moreover, on these journeys I never kept the same road, as I always guided myself by the compass, and altered my course according to the seasons, as I had to pass spots which were inundated at certain periods, and others where water, at times, was very scarce. The first two-thirds of the country was a wretched sandy region, without grass, on which stunted oaks grew here and there, very mountainous and dry, where no one would dream of settling or undergoing the perils of a pioneer for the sake of the land. Nearer to me no one ventured to come, as many attempts

had been made to settle on this fertile soil, but had all turned out unhappily; the last of them entailing the destruction of a family of nineteen persons. On my hunting expeditions I often saw their bones bleaching in the sun. As I said, no change had occurred in my position, save that my mode of life was safer and more comfortable; the country alone still remained a solitude, which no isolated visitor could enter without staking his scalp.

Hence, I was greatly surprised, one morning, when the sentry came into my house, and informed me that a white man was riding alone along the river, mounted on a mule, which is the most unsuitable of animals in the Indian country. I ran with a telescope to the turret at the south-east end of the fort, and not only found the watchman's statement confirmed, but also that the man had not even a weapon, unless it was hidden in two enormous packs which dangled on each side of his mule. The rider drew nearer, at one moment emerging on the ridges, and then disappearing again in the hollows. At length our growing curiosity was satisfied; and a white man, a German, saluted us with an innocently calm smile. On my asking how he had come here alone and unarmed, he said cheerfully, "Well, from the settlement. I was able to find your mule-track quite easily. Mr. Jones accompanied me for a whole day, and during the last four I have seen nobody." It soon came out that his name was Kreger, and that he was a botanist, who had come to examine the flora about us which had not yet been collected. For this purpose, he brought with him two enormous bundles of blotting-paper, which hung on his Lizzy, — so he called his gallant charger, — and, like wool-bags in a battery, might have protected him against Indian arrows, if he had had any missiles to reply with; but he only had a pistol in his trowsers' pocket, which

would not go off, in spite of all the experiments we made with it. Everybody had warned him of the danger to which he exposed himself on his journey to me ; and the last pioneer he passed, a Mr. Jones, had tried to keep him back by force ; but he had merely laughed, and declared that an Indian could not touch him on his Lizzy.

We all tried to make him understand how madly he had behaved, and that it was only by a miracle he had escaped the notice of the redskins, which must have entailed his inevitable death, during his long, solitary journey to us, and while sleeping at night by a large fire. He merely smiled at it all, and said that it could not be quite so bad, while making repeated applications to his snuff-box. As regarded his intentions of making his excursions from my house, I told him it was impossible ; because, when I went out hunting, I did not waste my time over plants, and he, as no sportsman, would be a nuisance to me : on the other hand, we could not think of letting him wander about alone, the danger of which I confirmed by telling him various adventures of mine. For all this I received him hospitably ; gave him a place to sleep in, and a seat at table ; showed him where to find corn for Lizzy, where he could wash his sheets, — in a word, made him as comfortable as lay in my power.

I had long intended to explore more distant countries than those I had visited during my sporting excursions, especially the continuation of our plateaux to the north, and had made my arrangements for this tour when Mr. Kreger surprised us by his advent. On the day after his arrival, we took a walk round the fort and the garden, during which he broke off the conversation every moment, and plucked some rare plant to put in his herbal, which he called his cannon ; and laughed at the revolver in my belt, and the

rifle I carried. I told him that I intended to make a journey, in which, if he liked to accompany me, he would be able to make his researches, as my hunting on this trip would be restricted to my meat supply. He was delighted, and agreed to come with me, to which I consented on condition of his riding one of my horses; and I recommended the mustang, whose powers of endurance I knew, and tried to prove by telling him how it came into my possession. But it was of no avail, for none of my cattle possessed the qualities of his Lizzy; and he offered a bet that no one could catch her. For the sake of the joke, the mustang and the mule were soon saddled: a mosquito-tree on the prairie, about half a mile from the fort, was selected as the goal; and away we started through the tall grass. It was really surprising how fast Lizzy went, cocking up her rat-like tail and long ears: she accepted with pleasure the shower of blows that fell on her, and reached the goal only twenty yards behind me. I laughed most heartily at the amusing appearance of our naturalist, and expressed my admiration at his mule's pace; but remarked at the same time, that, for no consideration in the world would I ride her in the country I intended visiting, because I was well acquainted with the obstinacy of mules, and knew, that, when called on to show their speed, they refuse to do so, and neither fire nor sword could induce them. All such remarks, however, produced no change in Kreger's invincible faith in his favorite; and as if he had assumed a portion of Lizzy's obstinacy through his long, friendly relations with her, he irrevocably adhered to his resolution of only entrusting his carcass to her during the impending excursion.

Our preparations, which were very simple, occupied us about a week: they consisted in removing Czar's shoes, and rubbing his hoofs frequently with bear's grease; grind-

ing coffee, and forcing it into bladders ; and in plaiting two new lassoes, for which I fetched two new buffalo-hides, in which chase the botanist accompanied me, and felt a pride in having given me an indubitable proof of his Lizzy's powers ; for she followed close at Czar's tail during the entire hunt.

The day for our start arrived, and the morning was spent in saddling our horses, and arranging our baggage in the most suitable way for both horse and rider, — a most important thing in these hot regions ; for the horse's back is easily galled, and then you are compelled to go on foot, which is very wearisome and fatiguing in a country where there are no roads. The naturalist at length completed his equipment of Lizzy, who looked more like a rhinoceros than a cross between a horse and a donkey. In front of the saddle hung the two bales of blotting-paper over the large bear-skin holsters, which, in addition to two pistols I had supplied, were crammed with biscuit, coffee, pepper and salt, snuff, &c. Over the saddle hung two leathern bags, fastened together by a strap, on which the rider had his seat. Behind the saddle, a frying-pan, coffee-pot, and tin mug, produced a far from pleasing harmony at every movement of the animal. Over the whole of this, a gigantic buffalo-hide was stretched, and fastened with a surcingle round Lizzy's stout body ; so that, like a tortoise, she only displayed her head and tail, and caused a spectator the greatest doubt as to what genus of quadruped she belonged. In order to complete the picture, Lizzy had two enormous bushes of a summer plant, which we call "Spanish mulberry," stuck behind her ears, as a first-rate specific to keep the flies off. I had repeatedly told Kreger of the absurdity of covering Lizzy with this coat of mail, in which she would melt away. But he said that I, too, had a skin over my saddle ; and he

wanted his to protect him at night against rain and dew. On the back of this monster our naturalist mounted, dressed in a long reddish homespun coat, trowsers of the same material, though rather more faded, with Mexican spurs on his heels, with wheels the size of a dollar, and a broad-brimmed felt hat, under which his long face, with the large light-blue eyes and eternally-smiling mouth, peeped out. Over his right shoulder hung his huge botanizing case, and over his left a double-barrelled gun of mine, loaded with slugs; his hat Mr. Kreger had also adorned with a green bush, and, sitting erect in his wooden Mexican stirrups, he swung his whip, and declared his readiness to start. I rode Czar, and the only difference from my ordinary equipment was that I had a bag full of provisions hung on the saddle behind me: this, and a little more powder and lead than usual, was all the extra weight Czar had to carry, and too insignificant for him to feel. With a truly heavy heart I bade good-by to Trusty, and most earnestly commended him to the care of my men. I could not take him with me to an unknown country, where I might feel certain of getting into situations where I must trust to the speed of my horse, and Trusty might easily get into trouble. The firearms I left at the service of my garrison, and, consisting of nearly fifty rifles and fowling-pieces, were carefully inspected. We then rode off, and soon heard the gate of the fort bolted after us.

It was the afternoon when we rode down to the river-side, and waded through the stream.

I rode first, and Lizzy followed obediently after me, though it cost some persuasion to make my companion refrain from riding a few yards lower down, in order to pluck some specimens of the beautiful aquatic plants growing on the surface, for he fancied it was no depth; while he

and his Lizzy, heavily laden as they were, would have sunk, and never reached the bank again alive. We reached the opposite side without any difficulty, and followed a deep-trodden buffalo-path into the forest, which runs with a breadth of several miles along the river.

Our path ran with a hundred windings through the solemn silence: it seemed as if every living creature that had sought this sanctuary, or fled from the heated plain, were silently revelling in its beauty, and gratefully reposing in its coolness; not a bird or insect could be heard, not even the sound of a falling leaf interrupted the tranquillity; and only the footfalls of our animals, and the snorting of Czar, echoed through the forest.

The sun was rather low when we rode through the wide prairie; and we could only advance slowly, because the grass at many spots came up to my horse's back: our cattle were very worn, and poor Lizzy panted painfully under her harness, while the perspiration poured from her in streams. The sun was setting when we reached a small affluent of the Leone, where I knew of a good camping-place, at which I determined to spend the night. We unloaded our animals, which I soon completed, as I merely undid the belly-band, pulled saddle and all over Czar's croup, removed the bit, and then gave him a few taps on his damp back as a sign that he could go wherever he pleased. My companion was much longer in removing all the articles of his household from Lizzy's back; and, when he had finished, she was a gruesome sight. White foam and dust had matted her long hair; her ears hung down, and almost touched the ground; and her generally melancholy face was rendered still more so by the bushes waving over it. I really felt sorry for the poor wretch, and bluntly told Mr. Kreger that I would not ride a step farther with him unless he left the

buffalo-hide here. He was also convinced, by his Lizzy's wretched appearance, that she could not carry this weight for long; and we agreed that I should tan the hide of the first deer I shot, and let him use it. Lizzy was led into the grass, and tied to a bush; and we arranged our bivouac for the night. Kreger fetched dry wood and water; I lit the fire, set coffee to boil, spitted strips of the turkey breast and liver, rubbed the meat in with pepper and salt, and put it to roast. Then I laid my horse-rug on the grass, with the saddle, holsters, and saddle-bag on it; hung the bridle and lasso on a branch; and took my seat in front of the fire on my tiger-skin, while watching the naturalist, who was making a thousand arrangements, as if we were going to remain at least a month here.

It had grown dark; supper was over. We fetched our animals and took them to water. Lizzy was hobbled in the grass near our camp; and Czar lay down behind a bush, but kept his head up for a long time as if looking for somebody. It was Trusty, his playmate, that he missed; nor did I feel altogether comfortable under my rug. I dreamed nearly the whole night of Indians, and continually woke, when I made up the fire, and lay down again with my rifle on my arm. The botanist, on the contrary, slept like a top, packed up in his buffalo-hide, with his head on an open bundle of blotting-paper; at the same time, he snored nearly the whole night, which did not help to improve my rest. Before daybreak Czar got up, shook himself, and walked up to Lizzy, who still lay half dead in the grass, as if to wish her good-morning. I roused my companion. We led the cattle to water; and, while I got breakfast, I advised Mr. Kreger to make some botanical researches, which he did. He came back with such an armful of plants, that I told him I thought he had better not take

more than one specimen of each ; as otherwise, by the end of our journey, Lizzy would be unable to carry the load. He laid the plants in the blotting-paper, bound his bundles ; and, ere we started, I rolled up the buffalo-hide with the hair outwards, and thrust it between two branches of a thickly leaved tree, where it would remain until our return.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. KREGER'S FATE.

WE had a good day's journey to our next bivouac, and I was acquainted with the country so far. We rode rather sharply, in spite of the tall grass, and at mid-day reached another small affluent of the Leone, where we granted ourselves and our cattle a few hours' rest. During this time, I went down to the river-side, and shot a large deer, whose hide I conveyed to our resting-place, along with some of the meat and the skull. After scraping the skin quite clean, I split the skull, took out the brains, made them into a thin paste with water, smeared the skin on the inside with this, and then rolled it up tight, and gave it to Mr. Kreger to carry, promising to get it ready for use next day. Brains dress skins famously, and this is the way in which the Indians prepare them. After lying in this state for four and twenty hours, they are washed clean, hung up in the shade, and, while damp, pulled over the sharp edge of a plank, or the back of a bowie-knife, till they are quite dry; which makes the skin as smooth and soft as velvet. In order to prevent a skin prepared in this way from turning hard when exposed to the wet, it is spread over a hole in the ground, in which rotten wood is kindled; and it is smoked on both sides till it becomes quite yellow. My botanist employed the halt in exposing the plants plucked in the morning to the sun, while he collected fresh ones. The

greatest heat was past; and it was about three P.M. when we set out again. The country here became more broken; the prairies were not so extensive, and here and there were covered with clumps of trees and bushes. The grass was not so tall as on the flat prairies, which considerably accelerated the pace of our cattle. Lizzy, especially, seemed to feel the difference between yesterday and to-day, and trotted lightly and cheerfully by the side of Czar, who on such tours always ambled, — a pace which is very pleasant for the rider, does not tire the horse, and gets over the ground wonderfully quick.

At nightfall we reached Turkey Creek, as I had christened it from the great number of those birds I found here. It was still light enough to choose a good spot for our bivouac, where we were near water: we were tolerably hidden, and had very good grass for our cattle. This evening, however, Czar was hobbled; that is to say, a short line round his neck was hooked to a padded ring he always wore on his near forefoot, so that he was obliged to keep his head to the ground, or his foot in the air, and hence could only walk.

Lizzy was again picketed, and we kept a watchful eye on the animals during the two hours they were grazing; for I had nearly reached the end of my *terra cognita*, and the border of regions which had never yet been visited by palefaces. Ere we went to sleep, the logs were covered with ashes, the cattle fastened to trees close to us, and we lay down to rest after supper; but I could not sleep so soundly as when I had Trusty by my side: the slightest sound disturbed me, and it was always a long time ere I fell asleep again. About midnight I started up, and fancied I had been dreaming about a storm; I looked up, and saw that all the stars had disappeared: at the same moment the

surrounding landscape was lit up by a flash of lightning ; and a violent thunder-clap rolled down the valley. I sprang up, blew the fire into a flame, laid wood on it, and woke the snoring naturalist, who asked, in great alarm, about the cause of being disturbed. I advised him to do as I did : then broke off an armful of bushes, laid them in a heap, put my pistols and bags on it, with the saddle over them, covered them with the horse-rug, and laid the jaguar-skin over all ; after which I helped Kreger to put his traps in safety, in which he greatly missed the buffalo-hide.

While we were occupied with these preparations, the thunder rolled almost uninterruptedly ; and the incessant flashes kept the tall trees brilliantly illumined. From the north we heard a sound like a distant waterfall ; and the turmoil soon rose to the mournful howling of the tempest which is only to be heard in these regions. I was well acquainted with the approaching spirit of the storm, for I had often met it ; hence I went up to Czar, put on his head-gear, and threw the bridle over my shoulder, giving Kreger a hint to do the same with Lizzy. But he had quite lost his head, and ran first to his heap of traps and then to the mule, when the storm burst over our heads in all its fury, and made the primeval trees crack in their very roots. It swept the earth, and carried away with it an avalanche of dust, leaves, and branches : our fire stretched out long tongues of flame over the ground, and sent its sparks whirling through the coal-black night into the gloomy wood. The groans of the hurricane were blended with the deafening peals of thunder, which at every second made the earth tremble under our feet ; and I had the greatest difficulty in making Kreger understand that he should come to me. I had selected a young white-oak, whose branches were interlaced with creepers, to shelter myself and Czar, and had

got out of the way of two lofty planes which were singing their death-plaint.

The fury of the storm still increased ; blast followed blast, crash followed crash ; the crowns of the two planes bent more and more ; and, with a shock resembling an earthquake, they suddenly fell across our fire, which scattered in all directions like a bursting shell, and hurled logs and brands over our heads. Czar started back, and in his terror would have broken half a dozen lassoes, had I not been prepared for this, and followed him with the bridle, while Lizzy dragged my companion, who would not loose the lasso, for a long distance through the grass.

The first drops of rain now fell, and I knew that the greatest fury of the storm had passed. I led Czar back under the oak, held my rifle with the hammer down under my arm-pit, shouted to Kreger to follow me, and stood as erect under my broad-brimmed hat as I could. The rain fell in torrents, so that in a few minutes we had not a dry thread on us ; a stream flowed between our feet, and the storm chilled us to the marrow. We stood silent, like herons ; and, though it was so dark that we could not see each other, we were contented at being still alive, and having our horses with us. It rained till nearly morning, which was never more heartily greeted than by us two ; and, ere long, a clear blue sky cheered us. The greatest difficulty was to light the fire again. My traps had remained perfectly dry, as they were protected by the bushes underneath, and the storm had been unable to touch them : I had the means of making fire ; but dry wood was not so easy to procure : still I succeeded in getting some out of a hollow old oak, and the botanist's blotting-paper helped to kindle the flame. It was scarce blazing ere we laid armfuls of dead wood from the fallen trees upon it, and soon produced such

a heat, that it dried us in a very short time. Kreger's traps had become rather wet; but the damage could be easily repaired: and we did not the less enjoy our breakfast on that account. The sun came out with its warming, cheering beams, and lit up the ruin which the storm had created during the night; while a calm glad smile on the face of surrounding nature seemed to contradict the possibility of its being capable of any such wild passion.

We were ready to start at a tolerably early hour; but an obstacle offered itself which threatened to take us far out of our course. The usually insignificant stream had swollen into such a rapid torrent, and spread so far over its banks, that we could not hope to cross it.

I had no intention to stop here, and preferred riding up the stream, in order to try and find a ford where we could cross without danger. We rode for a good two hours along the bank. The trees continually grew scantier, and the road more difficult through scattered bowlders and rocks. Between these, huge ferns sprang up, and, with the fallen trees, frequently blocked the way, so that we had to make a long circuit to fetch the river again. At length we reached a spot where the stream was more contracted; and an old cypress lay across it, which had been probably levelled by some storm. I went across the trunk, cut a long bough, and sounded the ground on the opposite bank: it rose at a steep pitch from the water, and was firm, so that I had no doubt but that our animals could easily clamber up it. I took the packages off Czar, carried them across, then fastened the lasso to my horse's bridle-ring, and crossed the stream with it, shouting to him to follow me. The bank on his side was rather steep, which fact he had discovered by feeling, with his fore-feet; but he leaped with all four feet into the stream, bounded up the other bank, and set to work on

the grass, which had been freshened by the last night's rain. Kreger followed my example; but Lizzy would not venture the leap: I therefore went across, suddenly seized her hind-quarters, and pushed her into the stream, which she entered head-foremost, but soon reached the other side uninjured.

We loaded again, and rode down the stream opposite the spot where we had spent the night. It was mid-day by this time; and, though the heat was not oppressive, our animals required a rest. We dined, and mounted again at about two o'clock. From this point, the country was quite strange to me; and it was necessary to make sure of the direction in which we proceeded. I compared the compass let into my rifle-but with the one I had in my pocket; and we rode at a quick pace toward the north-west.

The country again became flat, but very pleasant for ourselves and our horses.

About six in the evening, we crossed another small stream, which probably also flows into the Rio Grande, where we could have spent the night very comfortably; but we only filled our gourds, let our steeds take a hearty drink, and rode on, as we could at all events pass the night now without water. At about nine o'clock, we reached, with pleasant conversation, the end of the post-oaks, through whose middle a clear stream wound. We greeted it gladly; for it is always disagreeable to camp without water near at hand. Our animals were soon unpacked, a small fire was lit in the thickest bushes; and, at about eleven o'clock, we lay down, with Czar and Lizzy by our side, hoping for a better night than the last. We slept gloriously, and awoke the next morning invigorated, and in the best spirits.

The sun had just risen over the horizon when we mounted

and rode over the plain, after taking, with the help of the compass, the nearest direction to the forest rising in the blue distance above the wide prairie. According to my calculation, it was about ten miles off. The prairie was very flat, and only a few mosquito-trees grew on it here and there ; which sufficed to estimate distances, for that is a difficult job without such marks. I told Kreger it would be better for us to push on, now the road was good ; for a feeling of anxiety involuntarily oppressed me on this broad plain, where we could be so easily observed from the woods that formed a semicircle round it. I spoke to Czar every now and then ; and we had nearly reached the middle of the prairie when my horse gave a start, and tried to break into a gallop. I attempted to pacify him ; but he soon began snorting, and could not be held in.

I had examined the prairie on either side of us ; and, when I looked behind, to my horror I saw a band of Indians coming after us at full speed, in front of a cloud of dust. My next glance was at the forest ahead of us, to calculate how far it still was ; and then my eyes fell in terror on the mule at my side. The band of Indians consisted of at least a hundred, and hence must belong to a powerful tribe, possessing the best horses and weapons. I turned deadly cold when I looked at Kreger, who as yet had no idea of our peril, and was carelessly whistling. I made the utmost efforts to remain quiet, or at least to appear so, in order not to terrify my companion, and begged him to urge on his mule, while I loosed the rein of my snorting steed, and allowed it to make a few forward bounds. Whether Kreger noticed a change in my countenance or voice I do not know ; but he looked round, and noticing the approaching savages, with the ejaculation, "Great Heavens, Indians !" he drove his enormous spurs into his

mule's flanks, and pulled his bridle so tight that the excessively sharp bit lacerated the wretched Lizzy's mouth. Kreger had turned deadly pale. He looked wildly around him, and showered blows with his whip on Lizzy's hind-quarters. At his first movements, I foresaw what would happen, and tried to make him understand, that, if he let go the reins, Lizzy would be sure to follow Czar ; and we should be able to reach the forest, where the Indians could not hurt us. He did not hear,—he did not see. A picture of horror, he stared fixedly before him ; and Lizzy, putting her head between her legs, began kicking out behind. The danger grew every minute ; for the yell of the cannibal horde, borne on the breeze, was already echoing in our ears. I rode up to Kreger, and tried to drag the reins out of his hand ; but it was of no use ; no prayers, no remonstrances, reached his ear. It was almost impossible for me to hold Czar in any longer ; for at one moment he reared, at another bounded onward.

The Indians during this time had drawn so near that I could hear their several voices, and distinguish the bright colors with which their faces were painted. Our lives were in the greatest danger. My horse was terribly excited ; and any slip on his part would infallibly entail my death. Once more I shouted to Kreger to be reasonable, and let go the reins ; but he did not hear me. Minutes pressed. I let Czar go, and flew like the wind away from the hapless man, who was left to his fate ; and my staying longer would be of no avail. I quieted my horse, and looked back at my unfortunate companion. The horde was now close behind him ; in a second, a dense cloud of dust surrounded him and the savages, while a yell of triumph, whose cause I could guess only too well, reached my ears. I pressed closer to Czar, patted his neck, and away we flew like light. I

looked round again; a dense mob of redskins was after me; and, by their inhuman yells, they gave me to understand that I was to be their victim also.

The distance between us, however, had been increased. I drew a fresh breath; and my passion soon dispelled my feelings of pity, and its sister, fear. The forest rose rapidly before me, and my safety only depended on this question: Was there a stream on this side the wood? Firmly resolved, even in that event, to force Czar in, I clung closer to him with my knees, and gave him a cheery chirrup. Like a swan he flew over the grass towards the woods, whose single trees I already distinguished. There was no river on this side; and I soon reached the dense foliage, and led Czar snorting and champing in, while my pursuers, now few in number, stopped a long way from me on the prairie. I took out my handkerchief, and waved it at them to annoy them; for I would but too gladly have avenged my unhappy comrade: but they turned round, and I went along the buffalo-path into the forest, dragging Czar after me.

For about an hour I walked through the gloomy shade, cutting my way among the numerous creepers, till I reached a stream whose banks were quite forty feet above the water. The forest, on both sides of the path where it led down to the river, was so overgrown with thorns, that it was impossible to go up or down the river-side, especially with a horse; nor would it do to stay here all night with Czar, as there was nothing for him to eat, and, in event of pursuit, I could be easily tracked. Hence, I soon made up my mind, mounted Czar, hung my pistol-belt and saddlebags over my shoulders, took my rifle in my right hand, and forced him to follow the path down to the stream. It was so steep, that walking was impossible; but the faithful

creature, once on the steep, half slipped, half fell, into the river, as the bank was very smooth and slippery. The waves, as he fell in, broke over the saddle-bow; but the horse at once raised the whole of its back above the surface, and, snorting and puffing, passed the crystalline flood.

In spite of the rapid current, we reached the other side, when the path again ran up the bluff; but, had it been a few yards lower down, the horse would never have been able to climb the steep. The bank, as it was, was very high and precipitous; but my steed's strength was equal to the emergency, and burying its delicate feet in the soft, loose soil, it sprang up the bank, forcing me to cling round its neck, lest I should slip off behind.

I led Czar into the nearest thicket, unsaddled and hobbled him, and lit a small fire, partly to dry my clothes, partly to make a cup of hot coffee; for I had turned chill, and felt quite worn out. I had chosen my bivouac, so that I could see for a long distance along the road I had come, and kept my weapons in readiness, so that I might sell my life as dearly as possible, were I pursued. The scene of horror I had witnessed so lately, the probably frightful death of the naturalist, rose vividly before me; and, though I had accustomed myself to society again for a very short time, I now felt very lonely, and reproached myself for having ever consented to let Kreger ride a mule on this journey, when I knew the great danger. That he had fallen a victim to this error there could be no doubt; still I resolved to make certain of his fate.

Night set in, the fire had burnt low, Czar lay close to me; and I threw myself over his neck, patting him for his pluck and fidelity: he was very tired, and frequently gave a sigh, nor did he stir the whole night through. I remained awake till near morning; and, although I dozed now and

then, I was soon aroused by the hoot of an owl, the yell of a wolf, or the mournful cry of a panther; and I then listened to the sound of every falling leaf and every leaping squirrel. The night was cool, too, the ground under me rather damp, and the dew very heavy; so that I really awaited daylight with longing. Czar, however, would not get up, and I let him lie; for I knew that he needed rest, and I might very possibly be obliged to trust to his powers during the day. I had drunk a cup of coffee, and eaten a slice of venison by the time my faithful comrade rose. I led him down to the water, and saw a number of turkeys taking their morning draught at the river-side, but dared not fire for fear of betraying myself. It was about ten o'clock when I started down the stream again to find a convenient ford. The forest grew thinner, the shores flatter, and I soon found a deeply trampled buffalo-path which conveyed me without difficulty across the river; for, though it was very wide, it was quite shallow. Within half an hour I was again on the same prairie where Czar had saved me yesterday, and where the poor botanist had probably met his fate. I cautiously examined the whole plain with my glass, and could not see any thing except a few herds of buffalo, and a number of deer grazing carelessly among them. I rode up the forest-side to the path, where I found my previous trail, which was crossed by later hoofmarks, and then proceeded cautiously in the direction of the spot where I had left my companion.

While still a long way off, I saw the fearful sight before me. The sun lit up his bloody corpse stretched out on the grass. I rode up to him, and found that he was lying on his back, without his scalp, and covered all over with lance and arrow wounds. None of his clothing had been left him; the only things I found were my destroyed pistols and

double-barrelled gun, from which I removed the locks: even the blotting-paper had been taken, though for what purpose was a mystery. I would have gladly dragged the body to the wood, and buried it; but the distance was too great to do so without help. I therefore bade him a silent farewell, and turned my horse to the ford where I had crossed the river that morning.

CHAPTER VII.

A LONELY RIDE.

My route led me from here through a very fine country, consisting of undulating plateaux, covered with splendid mosquito-grass, and picturesquely broken up by post-oaks. It was still early in the evening when I neared one of these mounds, and let my horse refresh itself in a rippling stream at its base. The stream came straight down from the thicket on the mound; and the spot pleased me so well, that I resolved to pass the night there. I rode up the hill to the wood, whose tall trees chiefly consisted of holm-oaks, with a thick undergrowth of rhododendra and azaleas.

Here I encamped and hobbled Czar, who mercilessly plucked many a beautiful flower, and champed it between his teeth with the tender grass. I then took my rifle in order to see whether there was any dangerous animal in the wood, which was about a thousand yards in diameter. I had crept through it, and met nothing except a few old does that had their fawns hidden here; and, when I stepped out on to the prairie, I saw a herd of large male antelopes grazing about a thousand yards from me. This graceful animal, though frequent in our parts, is rarely killed by the sportsman; for it is the most shy of animals. Great curiosity alone brings it at times in the vicinity of the watch-gun, and hence I tried to attract the bucks grazing ahead of me. I chose a spot covered with rather tall grass, lay down on it with my cocked rifle by my side, but drew

my ramrod out, and fastened my handkerchief to it. I then whistled so loudly, that the sound reached the antelopes. All looked round towards me at once ; and I raised one foot in the air, and lowered it again a minute after. I saw that they had noticed it, and were leaping about ; I then raised the pocket-handkerchief, and lowered it again ; upon which the herd got in motion, led by one of the largest bucks. They came near me in a large circle ; but I continued my telegraphic motions till the antelopes, urged by their fatal curiosity, came within shot ; and their leader fell bleeding among the flowers, giving the flying herd a sad parting glance with its large beauteous eyes. I jumped up and fired my second barrel after the fugitives. Clap ! I heard the bullet enter the mark ; and another buck fell on the grass after a few more bounds.

I cut off the best lumps of game, and went back to the dark shade, in which Czar greeted me with a whinny of delight, and rested on my horse-rug, refreshed by the delicious perfumes of hyacinths, jonquils, daffodils, and narcissuses, that surrounded me. The night was warm ; and I required no fire after I had finished supper. I slept splendidly, with Czar at my side ; and the sun was high when I awoke to find my horse browsing on the grass within reach of his tether. I washed Czar clean, which I never neglected when I had the chance, and rode out of my arbor down the side of the hill, whence I could survey the country before me for many miles.

A glorious picture was spread out. The sun was not very high yet, so that the shadows over the landscape were rather long ; and the light mist gave the distance that reddish-blue tone which renders a landscape with a rich, bold foreground so exquisite.

For two days I wandered through these gardens of na-

ture, without being checked by any material obstacle. On the third day, I reached the mountains; and at evening found myself at the height where the limestone leaves off and the red granite begins. To my surprise I saw a splendid spring flowing from a narrow fissure in the granite, with sufficient grass growing near it to give Czar his supper and breakfast. I stopped here for the night, and had a glorious view from this stony height.

Day awoke me from a refreshing sleep as the sun was gilding the summits of the mountains that emerged from the sea of fog at my feet, round which the large eagles were circling. Greatly invigorated, I bade adieu to my pleasant resting-place, and led Czar over the rocks to the nearest valley, which soon received us under its shady trees. I traversed the valley for about two hours in a northern direction, following the course of a clear stream which ran through, with a thousand windings, like a mighty snake, and was framed in on both sides by thick bushes and old overgrown trees.

About mid-day, as I was following one of these windings, I suddenly found myself a few paces from a camp of Cato Indians, and a general "Ugh" reached my ear, as the men, about thirty in number, sprang up; and we gazed at each other in surprise, watching for a signal of peace or war. My presence of mind did not desert me; and knowing that these savages, when they have their wives and children with them, prefer a peaceful understanding, I waved a good-morning to them with a pleasant smile, and rode, holding my rifle and watching every movement of the men, to the next bend in the river, while the savages looked after me with open mouth, as if petrified. When I had got round a curve and was protected by the bushes, my first idea was to give Czar the spur, and gallop away; but this

would only have been a challenge to the Indians to pursue me : hence I made him amble, as well as he could manage it in the tall grass, and hastened to get out of this unpleasant company. It was highly probable that the savages would follow me, if only to get hold of my fine horse : hence I was obliged to calculate my next steps. I had but the choice of two ways, — either to throw out the savages by riding in the water and on stony ground, where they could not follow my trail, and then concealing myself at some easily defended spot, — or else to ride quickly away from them so far that they could not follow me on their wretched horses. The former was difficult and dubious, as the Indian's eye surpasses the nose of the best pointer ; and hence I chose the other, trusting to my horse's speed.

I cut off a slice of the antelope's leg, which was hanging on my saddle, about enough for supper, and left the rest behind, not to give my horse any unnecessary weight : then I set Czar at a sharp trot where the grass was dry ; and, when I reached barren ground, made him amble, — a pace at which he could do his mile in three minutes when put to it, though he took eight minutes when not hurried, and could go on for hours without a rest. I followed the course of the water, and, at the end of some hours, reached a gorge where the river ran through perpendicular rocks, and where my horse had scarce room to pass. I could see the water for nearly two miles ahead : the current was wilder and swifter here ; and, on looking down at its surface, I noticed several spots where the water rippled and foamed as it ran over rocks and stones. On both sides of the pass, the granite walls rose many hundred feet, so that it was impossible to scale them ; and though, farther to the right and left, buffalo-paths ran up them, the Indians must be well aware of this fact, and were probably lying in ambush for me there,

as they must have noticed from my course that I was quite a stranger to the country. There was only one choice for me, and I quickly made up my mind. I put my holsters over my shoulder, placed in them those articles which must not be wetted, and guided Czar into the river, in which he floated down with me at a tremendous pace past the rock-walls. I was not at all afraid about swimming him for an hour: the sole danger of the undertaking consisted in the large masses of rock over which the stream broke, and against which we ran in less than ten minutes. The river-bed was here rather wider, and hence, fortunately, the stream not so violent, or else we should probably both have found a watery grave. My alarm lest Czar had injured himself was alleviated by his speedy return to the surface; and, as he blew the water from his nostrils, we followed the stream to a wall of rock, where I noticed that the water was calm at the right hand end. I steered for this point; and we swam unimpeded through this channel into the deep water till the valley opened again before us, and my brave horse trod on the sand. I led him into the grass, examined him carefully, and found that he was slightly grazed on the near foreleg and the knee; but this caused me no apprehension. I let him rest in the shade for half an hour, as he was greatly excited, gave him all the white sugar I had brought expressly for him, and which was now wet; and then continued my journey along the river, as the grass, which must have been burnt here late in winter, and the fresh-grown crop had not yet sprung up, did not impede Czar's speed.

The valley constantly grew wider, and trended to the west. I left it at about six P.M., and followed a stream which ran from the north. Going along it till night-fall, I reached its source in the mountains, and was at least forty

miles from the Indians, when I unsaddled Czar, and hotbled him in the soft grass. I felt quite secure here, for I was no longer frightened about pursuit by the Catos; and it was not probable that accident would lead other Indians here at so late an hour, when they never march except for some special reason. Czar was tired, and soon came to me, holding up his hobbled leg, begging me to set him at liberty; and, when I had thrown the lasso over his neck, he stretched his delicate limbs on the grass. I, too, fell back on my saddle, and slept so soundly till morning, that I did not once look after the fire; and, on waking, did not find a spark among the ashes. It was soon lighted again, and breakfast prepared, before which I had a bath in the spring. Then I lit a pipe, washed Czar all over, and left the well-head, going towards the mountains in the north.

The road was so steep and fatiguing, that I dismounted: still, I seemed to be on a path at times trodden by buffaloes, which was continued when I reached the top, where a wide table-land, covered with rich vegetation, was expanded before me. On all sides I saw herds of grazing buffalo; but, though my mouth watered for a slice of hump and a marrow-bone, I did not like to distress my horse, or go too far away from him while stalking. I rode quietly on through the tall grass, resolved only to shoot some animal I could ride up to, and succeeded in doing so towards evening, when I saw something dark moving in the grass, which I recognized as a black wolf. In a second I was off Czar's back, as I should be very glad of such a skin; and was just about to fire, when I saw, on the other side of a ditch I had not observed in the tall grass, a very large bear running away. Owing to the high plants, I could not fire; and, forgetting my former resolution, I leapt on Czar's back, and flew after the fat fellow. His road led through a number of low mos-

quito-trees, so that I was obliged to bend down over my horse's neck to escape being caught in the branches. I was close to the bear; but it coursed so rapidly under the branches, that I could not give it a shot from my revolver. At length we emerged from the trees; and I flew a few yards after the bear, when suddenly Czar made such a leap to the right, that I must have been thrown, had it not been for the heavy holsters that kept me on. I turned the horse round again, and then noticed that the bear had disappeared in a gap before me; and, on drawing near, I found a *cañon*, going down a hundred feet sheer; and about twenty feet wide at this part. It was a gully washed out by the rain, which I had not observed, owing to the tall grass. I dismounted, and walked to the spot where the bear had disappeared; saw that the bushes had been uprooted about thirty feet lower down, but could not discover a trace of the bear. I owed it solely to the agility of my horse, that I had not followed the bear down the precipice; and I willingly resigned the delicate ribs, which, in imagination, I had seen roasting at my camp-fire.

I continued my journey over the grassy plateau. The sun poured its last vertical beams on the dry soil, which was intersected by deep cracks a foot in breadth. There was not a breath of air: my horse became very warm, and looked in vain for water in the deep, dry ditches. I, also, pined for a fresh draught; for the water in my pouch had become quite warm, and Czar could not swallow it when I poured some into his mouth. My horse-rug was so hot, that I was hardly able to sit on it; and the barrels of my rifle almost blistered my hand. I stopped several times in the shade of an isolated tree to draw a little breath; but this did not advance my journey: and I could not possibly spend the night here without water. How far I still had

to ride to the next stream I did not know ; but I was aware that I might travel for days in these mountains without finding a spring or a stream. The sun was on my left hand when I reached the end of this plateau ; but, instead of perceiving the longed-for sign of water, a poplar-tree, I saw before me almost impassable hills covered with loose stones, that rose behind one another like sugar-loaves. I could only reckon on an hour's daylight ; and it was highly probable that I should have to pass an unpleasant night. So far as I could see northward, the hills were piled on each other, without offering a prospect of water : hence I turned my horse westward, on the chance of reaching the valley which ran along parallel with the plateau. The rocks over which I wearily climbed were red-hot, and burnt my feet ; and, at the same time, I suffered intolerable thirst. I had shared the last water in my flask with Czar. My mouth was very dry and my tongue clove to the palate. In vain I looked from every height I reached for the longed-for sign, and wandered up hill and down, till the sun sank behind the distant blue mountains, and the first shadows of night spread over the land. I had passed over several hills in this manner, when I saw a valley before me in the twilight, which I greeted with renewed hopes ; but the darkness set in so rapidly, that I was unable to continue my journey. Feeling quite knocked up, I threw myself on the warm rocks, holding Czar by the rein, to wait for the rising moon.

I had rested about an hour ere it grew light enough to continue my journey ; and I soon reached the plain, where, unfortunately, the grass grew very high. I was obliged to mount my horse again, for it was impossible to walk through the grass ; and, though I was very sorry to do it, I urged the poor creature on, while he continually strove, by

hanging his head and shaking his neck, to make me understand it was high time to go to rest. I had continued my journey for two hours without stopping, when the grass grew shorter, my horse, every now and then, stepped on stones, and I saw a tree or two again. I had probably passed the lowest part of the valley; and, as I had found no water in it, there was no prospect of doing so at a greater elevation. I was awfully tired and sleepy; and my horse was quite as bad: I therefore unsaddled under an elm, fastened Czar to the tree by his long lasso, and, in ten minutes, I was dreaming of cool crystalline water; but, for all that, woke at daybreak exhausted and feverish; and, to my horror, missed my horse.

I sprang up, surveyed the wide plain, and who can describe my delight when I saw Czar's white coat shining, a few hundred yards off, over a small mimosa-bush, behind which he was enjoying the fresh grass in a hollow? The knot of the lasso had come undone; and thus Czar had been able to look about for more agreeable fodder. I led him nearer my bivouac, and was just going to light my fire, when I saw smoke rising in the west, about three miles from me. I quickly pocketed my flint and steel, saddled, and rode towards the highest part of the ridge, which divided the valley in half. When I had nearly reached the top, I dismounted, and crawled to the highest point, whence I surveyed the valley, and observed an Indian camp, round which some three hundred horses and mules were grazing. I saw, through the grass, that the various families were sitting at the fires in front of their leathern tents, with the exception of a few children that were playing about. The camp was on the other side of a stream which wound through the valley from the north. Though I longed so for water, I must avoid the neighborhood of these savages, who

might prove very dangerous to me in such an unknown and desolate country. I rode back through the valley in which I had spent the night, and into the mountains on its eastern side ; for, if I had followed the valley to reach the river, I must have been noticed by the Indians, on my white horse. The road was tiring, as I was frequently obliged to walk ; and the heat on these barren hills soon rendered my thirst intolerable.

It was a mid-day when I, with a firm resolution to ride to the water, cost what it might, guided my horse down a ravine, and suddenly saw before me the fresh verdure of plants which only grow at very damp spots, under a heap of dry piled-up trees, among which a number of turkeys were running : I forgot the Indians and the risk, shot two old gobblers, and threw myself between the tall ferns, over the cold springs that welled up among them, in order to quench my fearful thirst. I lay for nearly half an hour, ate a bit of biscuit, and, as I could not fully quench my thirst, continually applied to the spring. This was one of the most glorious meals I ever enjoyed ; and I believe that I would sooner have defended myself against a whole tribe of Indians than leave this spot unsatisfied. The shade here was not sufficient, however ; and hence, I went a little lower down the stream, with Czar and my two turkeys, where I found a cooler resting-place under a group of elms and oaks. After this, hunger began to be felt ; for with the exception of a small slice of antelope, and a little biscuit, I had eaten nothing since the preceding morning. I set to work on one of the turkeys, and spitted such a quantity of the meat, fat and lean, that I was obliged to laugh at myself. The exterior of the meat hardly began to get roasted, ere I cut it away. In the mean while, the coffee was getting ready, and I concluded my repast ; after

which I found great difficulty in keeping my eyes open. I fetched Czar, who had also enjoyed himself, and fastened him to a tree; took my rifle in my arms; and, in a few minutes, was fast asleep, forgetting all the dangers that surrounded me.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE JOURNEY CONTINUED.

AT about five o'clock, I was awakened by the sun, whose oblique beams were able to reach me through the trees. I felt refreshed and strong; made Czar get up, saddled, and followed the stream, which led me to the river I had seen in the morning. I approached the valley cautiously, when I rode out of the mountain gorge, and carefully surveyed it with my glass, without finding a trace of the Indians anywhere. It was very important for me to know whether they had gone up or down the river (the latter was the more probable), because most of the buffalo-herds I had seen lately were going southward; and the savages, as a rule, follow these animals. As the banks of the river were not high, I rode into it, watered my horse, and, without any difficulty, reached the other side; when I was soon on the path of the Indians, who had gone south, as I expected. I rode up this trail northwards, in order, if possible, to reach, before sunset, some stream coming from the mountains, as I would not pass the night where I was; for it appeared to be a pass greatly used by Indians: so that I ran greater danger here of meeting fresh hordes than I did among the hills. I rode very quickly, and, at sunset, turned into a narrow valley bordered on either side by very lofty precipices. For about two miles, I followed the torrent, which wound through loose blocks of granite; and frequently could scarce get through the tall ferns and reedy

plants which grew between the wildly scattered boulders. The gorge gradually became narrower, and the granite walls steeper; and, in the twilight, I saw the end of it no great distance from me.

I had dismounted, and was going with Czar round a block of granite, when a large stag dashed past me from the end of the gorge, hardly fifty yards off; and I distinctly saw another darker colored animal bounding after it, through the tall grass. In an instant, the flying stag, with its broad antlers thrown back, was twenty yards from me, and bounded over a rock close by; while, at the same moment, a panther of enormous size covered the track of the deer with its gigantic paws. It had scarce touched the ground, however, ere the bullet from my rifle crashed through its shoulder-blade; and the crack, echoing through the gorge, thundered in its ears. The panther ran its head into the grass, while its hind-quarters flew up in the air; but, at the next instant, it rose furiously in the grass, showing its dazzlingly white teeth, and stretching out its claws to leap on me. I held my rifle firmly to my shoulder; and, as the animal rose, fired at the white stripe under the throat. The bullet passed through its breast; and, rising on its hind legs, it turned a somersault, and died with a furious kick. It was very old, and had probably inhabited this tempting spot for many years, to surprise the game that came here to drink at the spring, and enjoy the fresh, green pasturage. Eight feet long, from the snout to the tail, the prince of the valley lay stretched out before me; and round it the bones of its victims were bleaching in the grass. I went up to Czar, who, probably recognizing his foe, had run some hundred yards down the valley, and was looking after me with his head up. I led him up to the slain panther; but it needed much persuasion ere he would draw quite close to





this arch-foe of his race. After making Czar stand by the panther a while,—which I dragged about, to remove his natural fear of the creature,—I led him to the end of the ravine, where the ground was covered with young, tender grass, unsaddled him, and laid my traps under the evergreen oaks, in order to prepare my camp.

As the darkness had greatly increased, I ran back to the panther, fastened the lasso round its neck, and dragged it to my camping-place, intending to skin it in the morning. I lit the fire, prepared supper, and lay down on my horse-rug; every now and then turning the spit, or piling up the sticks round the coffee-pot.

The night passed without the slightest disturbance; and, at dawn, I skinned my panther, which had a great number of scars; principally arrow and lance wounds, as it seemed. After cleaning the skin from all fleshy particles, I spread it out to dry at the fire, while I bathed, and swallowed my breakfast. I sought all round the bivouac for weapons or other articles belonging to the dead man, but found none; and, as the sun was already high, I set out on my wanderings again.

Just as I reached the entrance of the gorge, I saw a herd of seven buffalo-bulls grazing. In a second, I leaped off Czar, and ran from stone to stone, till I got within ten yards of the shaggy monsters, from which I was only separated by a rock. I crept under this on the ground, till I had the buffaloes before me: the nearest one stood motionless, with its broad, hairy forehead turned towards me; and I aimed at the centre of it, although I had often tried in vain to kill a buffalo by a shot through the head. This time, however, the bullet did its work; and the other bulls fled round the rock towards the valley. As the fat buffalo would supply me with food for several days, I fetched my

horse, took the axe hanging from the saddle, and set to work cutting out the sirloin ; while Czar grazed by my side, and now and then licked up the blood. I removed a piece of the hide from the hump, in order to secure a part of the streaky meat ; cut out the tongue between the jaws, as I could not think of opening the mouth ; took two marrow-bones, and left the remaining fourteen hundred pounds of meat for the wolves and buzzards. All these dainties were hung about my saddle : for the hotter the sun shines on them, the less does the meat putrefy. With a parting glance at the ravine, I again struck the Indian trail, which I followed northwards up the river.

At two P.M., I crossed the river, as it trended to the west, and followed a beautiful valley for some hours, to the north-east, where I did not notice a single trace of horses or Indians ; while the path I had hitherto been following seemed to be exclusively made by nomadic savages.

At about six in the morning, I reached a spot where two streams joined ; and I could not make sure of water farther up the valley. Hence I followed the eastern arm, and reached, at sunset, the hills bordering the valley, between which I bivouacked, as I had every thing I required. For several days I continued to follow a northern course. The character of the soil varied as before ; the mountains had the same shape, were bare at top, and covered with loose stones, between which a few low cactuses, aloes, and torch-weeds grew. I also rode over a good deal of table-land, but got away from it as soon as I could ; for, through the entire want of water, the ground here grows very hot, and you are thoroughly roasted.

I found the grass on the prairie not very high, which made it easier going for my horse, but more difficult for me to approach the game, which appeared remarkably shy

and restless. My stock of meat was exhausted ; and I ate my biscuit and salt tongue as rarely as possible, so as to have food by me in case of need. I dared not ride down the buffalo, as my white horse could be easily distinguished from the uplands ; and I must spare his strength. Nor did I care to go far from Czar afoot, as a single foot Indian might easily be hidden in the grass, and reach him more quickly than I could. Hence I deferred my chase till I reached the woods that rose ahead of me.

I rode over the rolling prairie, till, on emerging from a hollow, I saw three very plump old deer grazing not far from me, behind a few low mosquito-bushes. I sprang off Czar, hobbled him, and crawled on my stomach through the grass towards the deer, dragging my rifle after me. Although I had got within shot, I wished to advance a few more yards in order to reach a hollow where I should be able to kneel and fire. On reaching it, I pulled my rifle after me, and was just about to fire, when a monstrous rattlesnake glided away from under my hand. I sprang up in terror, watched it darting through the grass with head erect, and away fled my deer over the prairie ; and I had had all my trouble for nothing.

I was very much annoyed, sent some strong language after the snake, and returned to my horse, who had been taking advantage of his rest in the long grass. I took off his hobble, and rode towards the forest, which seemed inviting me to enter its friendly shade. It was mid-day when I reached the wood, thirsting for a fresh drink. I hung my hat on the saddle, and greedily inhaled the cool breeze that blew through the majestic trees, and then followed on foot a buffalo-path, which wound between the bushes. It led me to a clear stream, which poured over loose masses of stone, between rather high banks. I let Czar glide down, for the

path was very steep ; watered him, and made him leap up the other bank ; then I filled my gourd, and quenched my thirst with the cold water.

I was just going to remount, when I heard the sound of a herd of peccaries, or Mexican swine, coming towards me, probably in search of water. As the undergrowth was not very dense on the side of the stream, I was able to see them coming for some distance. There were about twenty old pigs with a lot of sucklings : they ran very slowly, and I had time to pick out a fat boar. I shot it, sprang on my horse at once, and, as I expected, found the whole herd dash furiously after me. I had room before me, and dashed through them into the forest. They did not follow me ; and I granted them time to bid adieu to their fallen comrade, while I led Czar into the wild oats which grew luxuriantly here. In a quarter of an hour, I rode back to my game. The herd had retired ; and I at once cut away the musk-gland which the boar had on its back, of the size of an egg ; for, if I had allowed it to grow cold, it would have been impossible to eat the meat, owing to the powerful musky taste.

I rode for about two miles along the skirt of the next forest I came to without finding a buffalo-path ; and yet the forest was so densely overgrown with thorns and brambles, that I could not enter it without a path. At length I found one, which had been probably trodden for centuries by millions of buffaloes. I followed it into the wood, and soon reached a small river, whose steep banks were about eight feet high. Here I refreshed my horse and myself, and followed the path on the opposite side, where the forest grew clearer ; and I soon caught a glimpse of the prairie. The bushes and a few isolated trees ran for some distance out into the prairie. I dismounted, and led my horse to the

last bushes, in order to survey the plain ere I intrusted myself to it, and because I was undecided whether I would not bivouac here. I had advanced to the furthestmost bushes, which were brightly illumined by the western sun; and I found the prairie was populated by a few deer and buffaloes, whose evident watchfulness and restlessness I could not ascribe to my appearance. I looked down the wood to the rocks, and, to my terror, saw close under them, on the prairie, a war-party of about a hundred and fifty Indians, who were riding towards the forest, one behind the other. I sprang in front of my horse, in order to cover its bright chest, and hurriedly raised my telescope. They were Lepans. I knew them by their plumed lances, gayly-decorated shields, and fine horses; for these Indians are the best-mounted and most warlike on the Western steppes. I stood as if petrified, for fear lest they might see a movement on my part, while I held Czar by the rein. They had not yet seen me; for they rode past, and drew close to the wood: a few yards farther and they would have been out of sight, and the danger momentarily passed. Suddenly, however, the whole party halted, and pointed towards me. I had been seen; there could be no doubt of the fact: for I noticed through my glass that they were holding their hands over their eyes, to have a better look at me. There was not a mile between us; my horse had been travelling all day. The wood was very narrow, and the path leading through it very broad. I was aware of the courage of these Lepans, and saw no salvation save in the endurance of my horse. With one leap I was on his back, threw away the flesh, and darted into the wood, with the whole band of savages after me like a whirlwind. The river made a number of bends, which I was compelled to follow. The Indians' horses were extremely swift: this was the first

time I had ever known any horses to keep up with mine. But I had not yet called on Czar: I now drove the spurs into him, and let go the reins. I flew round the next corner, and then round the next, ere the Indians reached the first, which was a good mile behind. At this moment, I saw that the river-bank was covered for the next half-mile with loose pebbles. I turned Czar round, and leapt him down the eight-foot bank into the river, whose bottom, composed of soft sand and shallow water, he reached without injury. I then galloped up the stream in the direction I had just come, covered by the tall bank, and the wood between it and the prairie, calculating that the Indians would not miss my track among the loose stones, but would gallop through them to the next angle of the wood, which would give me a grand start. I remained at a gallop for about a hundred yards, so that the water met over my head, until I reached a deeper spot, where Czar was obliged to swim for a short distance. At this moment, I heard the savage horde dash past, and the war-yell of these unchained demons echoing through the forest! Probably the short extent of deep water saved me, for, at this spot, only a few thin bushes grew on the bank; and, though the savages were some distance off, they would infallibly have noticed the water being dashed up by Czar. I again reached a firm bottom, and followed the stream as quickly as I could; while the yells of the Indians were audible a long way behind me.

I was beginning to feel more secure, when my progress was impeded by large masses of rock, between which the shallow water rippled. I leapt on one of these blocks, and gave Czar a gentle pull to follow me: he sprang up, clambered across, and reached, without injury, a good sandy bottom on the other side. I hurried down the stream — partly swimming, partly climbing — till I saw the lofty rocks on

my right through the forest, and hence knew that I was below the spot where the Lepans had halted when they first sighted me. I still followed the stream, although the water came up to my horse's girths; but it suddenly made a curve, and ran close past the rocks, at a spot where they opened like a narrow gateway, leaving a passage for a rivulet that flowed from the interior. The entrance through the granite walls was not more than thirty feet wide, and the gorge about a hundred feet deep, beyond which was a beautiful little valley enclosed by the rocks, about a mile in length, through which the stream rippled.

I rode up the rivulet; on both sides of which the most exquisite flowers grew. Sitting down on a rock at the entrance, I listened, but did not hear a sound of my pursuers. That the Lepans had overridden my trail was certain: but it was equally certain that they would ride back, when they noticed their error, and find my track; for my horse, in leaping into the stream, had left distinct marks on the bank, and its track might also be followed in the sandy bed.

While I was thus weighing my situation, I inspected my fire-arms, which had got slightly wet, put on fresh caps, and was taking a look at my water-tight powder-flask, when a yell echoed through the wood from the east. I knew its meaning perfectly well: the Lepans had found my trail, and were assembling for a consultation. At this sound, all prospect of an amicable arrangement departed; and I was determined, in the event of an attack, on defending myself here, as, in case of need, I could always escape down the stream.

All became silent again; evening spread her veil over the earth; the silver herons and flamingoes uttered their hoarse cry as they flew homewards; and the owl announced the setting-in of night. The outlines of the trees and rocks continually grew more indistinct; and it was time to fetch

up Czar, who was nibbling the tender grass along the stream.

Suddenly a loud, long, lasting yell was raised, which, however, seemed much farther off, and to come from the prairie on the south side of the forest. Probably, the Lepans had found my trail through the prairie; but it was a satisfactory sign to me that they had not attempted to follow me along the river-bed. In all other directions, my hiding-place was unassailable, unless there was a second entrance into the valley in my rear, as was probable. It had already grown so dark, that I could not distinguish my white horse from the rocks, although the stars shone brilliantly above me. Before it was quite dark, I sat down by the side of Czar, to prevent him lying down. I grew very sleepy; but the yell of the Indians still sounded too loudly in my ears for me to indulge in repose. I tried to keep awake by smoking, which helped for a while; but smoking in perfect darkness is no enjoyment: hence I soon grew tired of it, and tried to keep awake by walking up and down. Czar, too, was tired of standing: he stamped impatiently with his fore-feet, and tried the strength of the lasso by tugging at it. At length, nature claimed her dues; and I could not possibly keep awake any longer: I took off Czar's load, laid it in the darkness against the stone to which he was secured, spread out my rug, and lay down on it with my rifle on my arm. Czar was not long in following my example, and tried, as usual, to have a roll before going to sleep, which might have injured me or the saddle in the darkness: hence I pressed his head to the ground; and we were both, ere long, as soundly asleep as the rocks around us.

Day was scarce breaking when I started up and looked around me. Czar lay motionless; and I did not disturb him. I went out of the gorge, and brought in some dry

wood, lit a fire, and made coffee, being obliged to breakfast on my biscuits and salt tongue; for the dainty lumps of pork I had cut yesterday had probably served a wolf for supper. While I was breakfasting, my faithful steed raised his head, and rested it on my knee, that I might remove the bridle which I had left on during the night. I did so; hobbled him out in the grass, and then sat down again at my small fire, where I could see along the river and up the valley behind me, whose steep granite walls were just beginning to be illumined by the rising sun. I was very curious to learn whether there was another entrance besides the one I commanded; for, if not, it was very possible that my hiding-place was unknown to the Indians, as the steep hills around did not reveal that they concealed such a fairy-like kingdom in their interior.

It was about nine o'clock, when, after washing and saddling Czar, I rode off to examine the secrets of the wonderful valley. I looked around at the lofty walls of granite, but could not notice any other connection with the external world but the one through which I had come. The valley, about a mile in diameter, was covered with a most luxuriant crop of young grass, and a number of clumps of trees and bushes, through which the rivulet wound. It struck me as curious that I saw no game on such rich pasturage; for, excepting a flock of turkeys, I had put up nothing, although I had reached the centre. The turkeys were very shy, and ran off when I dismounted to shoot one; but, just as I was going to mount again, an old cock came running up; and my bullet put a speedy end to his existence. The report had hardly begun to echo through the rocks, ere a swarm of aquatic birds of all sizes rose right in front of me, like flies in the sunshine; but as I remained quietly seated on the grass, reloading my rifle, they soon settled down

again. I walked through the bushes, and noticed a large pond with flat banks covered with all sorts of gayly plumaged birds, among which herons and flamingoes occupied a prominent place. The banks were literally covered with these birds, — some of which were standing sentry on one leg, while others were up to their knees in the water, and engaged in catching frogs. When I stepped out of the bushes, all the birds rose again: a portion seated themselves, with loud croaks, on the nearest trees, while the rest rose in the air, and proceeded in various directions to less disturbed regions. It now appeared as if all the inhabitants of the valley had left it; and I was not sorry at having secured a good meal, for my stomach was beginning to complain about neglect. I hung the turkey on my saddle, and rode to the pond, whose banks were so trampled by the birds that not a single blade of grass grew on them; but I noticed a great number of jaguar-tracks, some old, others quite recent. The animals to which these tracks belonged must consequently live in the valley, as they could not climb over the rocks, and had not passed my night-quarters. It was now clear to me why this splendid pasture was so deserted, and only visited by birds; while hundreds of buffaloes and deer would have found abundant food. I rode nearly round the valley, with a revolver in my hand, as I expected at any moment to meet the landlord; but I did not see him; and not a living creature remained in the valley but the few turkeys which had probably strayed thither. I rode back to my bivouac, as it was mid-day, and both myself and Czar felt hungry, and prepared a part of the turkey for dinner, while Czar had a hearty feed of grass. When we had finished our meal, I tied him up close to me under the overhanging rocks, where the sun did not fall on us. I threw wood on the fire, and lay down to

sleep, to make up for the last night's lost rest. The sun was hardly illumining the tops of the eastern mountains of the valley when I awoke invigorated, and led my horse out into the grass again.

CHAPTER IX.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

I HAD already made up my mind to spend the night here ; so I got about my supper at an early hour, and soon carried a good stock of wood to my camp, with which to keep up my fire during the night. I slept undisturbed till daybreak, took a refreshing bath in the cold stream while my breakfast was getting ready, then rode Czar into a deep spot, washed him thoroughly, and was soon ready to leave this mysterious but so pleasant spot, with the resolution to visit it again, sooner or later.

My road led into the river again, on whose rippled surface the night-mist rolled along with the current. But, on further reflection, I saw how many obstacles now stood in my way. The current was very powerful ; and the waves broke against my horse's strong chest ; the bottom, covered with loose bowlders, rendered its footsteps unsteady, and constantly put it in danger of falling. At length I reached the bed of rocks, which blocked the entire breadth of the river, over which Czar had clambered with such agility : it now seemed to me purely impossible that a horse could achieve such a feat, although the marks of his shoes proved to me the contrary. I would not venture, however, to make my horse leap it again ; but took my axe out of its sheath, entered the water, which was shallow here, and cut away the creepers and bushes hanging over the bank ; and thus formed a much better path beneath them over a very

few large but flat stones. I led Czar across, and then slowly walked on, constantly thrusting on one side the vines hanging with a length of fifty feet over the water, in order to force myself through them.

After great exertions, I at length reached the buffalo-path by which I had crossed the river on the previous day but one ; and followed it again to the skirt of the wood : but this time with greater caution. I left Czar behind in the thick bushes, and crept out alone to the edge of the prairie, and examined the latter carefully with my glass. The grassy expanse before me, far as I could see, was covered with countless buffaloes and numerous deer, which were grazing quietly and carelessly ; and I recognized, at a great distance, a large troop of wild horses, which must consist of several hundred. These were the surest signs that no Indian had shown himself, on this day, upon the plain : so I returned to my horse, and pursued my journey northward through this prairie.

In about an hour, I drew near the horses, which were giving vent to their playfulness by rearing, kicking, and galloping about. I rode along a hollow under the hill, in order to get as near them as I could ; in which I perfectly succeeded, as the wind was favorable. I rode to within a short distance of them, under the hill on which they were standing, when Czar scented them, suddenly raised his head, and expressed his delight at the friendly meeting by a loud snort. In an instant, the troop dashed up to greet the stranger. It was led by a coal-black, very powerful stallion, whose mane, some five feet in length, flew wildly round his broad neck. The thunder of their hoofs rolled along like a tempest towards me, till we faced each other at a distance of about twenty paces. The black stallion fell as if struck by lightning ; and the nearest horses fell upon

him in the wildest confusion, while Czar gave them to understand by a friendly whinny that there was really no reason for such fear. It was a wondrously beautiful sight, when these noble, powerful animals rose again, and flew over the grassy sea, like smoke before the blast; the black, with wildly flying mane, flashing eyes, and scarlet nostrils, at their head. I looked after them for a long time, and regretted that I could not risk leading a captured horse home, as I could have easily thrown my lasso over the stallion.

Czar was beside himself that he was not allowed to join in the race, and tried, for a long time, to check the speed of the fugitives by his snorts: he danced; threw his croup from one side to the other, and furiously tore at the bit; but it was all of no use, and serfdom still lay on his broad neck, even though with rosy bonds.

The sun was rather low on the horizon, when I found myself about five miles from what seemed to be a very large forest, behind which rose the mountains which I had noticed a few days previously in the azure distance when I took my first glance at this valley. I leapt from my horse, hobbled it, and crawled through the grass after two very old stags,—one of which was quietly grazing behind a fallen mosquito-tree, while the other, as if it had noticed something, thrust its thick neck over the stump in my direction. I had left my hat with Czar, in order to attract less attention, and the sun shone hotly on my head; but what will not a hunter readily endure if it enables him to draw nearer the game? At length, there were about one hundred yards between us; and I had reached a small patch of flowering jalap-trees, which covered me. I raised myself on one arm, and fired, aiming at the head. I saw that the deer was hit close to the heart: it ran about fifty paces with its comrade, and then fell dead.

After reloading, I rode up to the deer, and laid in some days' supply of meat, hung it on the saddle, and continued my journey to the forest, which I entered, about sunset, by a very broad open buffalo-path. I was sure that the forest was traversed by a stream, and resolved to seek the latter ere I selected my night-quarters. I followed the path with my rifle on the saddle-bow, when suddenly my horse gave a start; and a very old bear entered the path hardly twenty yards ahead of me, stopped, and, with its head turned from me, began nibbling at the roots of a few small bushes. It took scarce a moment to raise my rifle and pull the trigger; and in the next I pulled Czar round, and rode for the prairie. On looking round, however, I perceived that the bear had only sprung a few yards after me, and was now half sitting, half lying on the path, and showing its savage teeth. When I slowly approached it, I noticed that its fury was heightened with every step I took; and only its inability to rise prevented it from attacking me. I therefore rode close up, and sent a second bullet through its head. It was a very heavy fat bear; and I was really sorry that I could turn it to so little account.

Not very far from this spot I found the stream, and resolved to pass the night on its bank, as the forest on the other side seemed very extensive, and it was doubtful whether I should find there good provender for my horse. I watered Czar, filled my bottle, and rode back to the bear, from which I cut a paw, the tongue, and some ribs. I then camped in the forest at a spot where the most splendid wild oats awaited my horse. The paw was put to cook in the ashes for the next morning; but the ribs were to make their appearance on the supper-table.

The night was dark, and rendered the light which my fire cast upon the dark-green roof above my head all the more

attractive, while the giant brightly illumined trunks looked like pillars supporting it. I lay on my tiger-skin, and amused myself with counting the blood-red funnel-shaped flowers of the bignonia, which swung in long, drooping festoons from one tree to the other, and, lit up by my fire, resembled so many red-glass lamps. My eyes gradually closed, the pictures of dreams became more and more blended with those of reality, until a calm sleep fell on me to strengthen and refresh me.

Day was breaking when I opened my eyes ; and the scene which had so sweetly lulled me to sleep had faded away. The fire was out ; and, instead of the glow-worms, a gray mist lay over the bushes, the grass around me was very damp, and the bear's black hide was silvered over with dew. From all sides the loud chuckling of the turkeys reached me, and I felt a tickling in my forefinger to bend it upon one of these birds ; but then I looked at the mountain of flesh which lay before me, and rested my rifle again against the tree, and went to the fire to pull the paw out of the ashes. The fire soon burnt brightly, and dispersed the cold, damp air around me : I put coffee on, and a bear's rib before the fire, led Czar to the stream, and refreshed myself and him. Then I returned to the fire, led my horse into the oats, and paid my respects to the bear's paw and rib. The sun was also darting his rays through the trees, when I was ready to start, and rode through the stream towards the dense forest.

I rode for about three hours in this labyrinth, passing from one buffalo-path to another, until the ground began to grow more uneven, and here and there large masses of rock rose between the trees. I dismounted, and was leading my horse up a narrow path by the side of a great bowlder, when I suddenly saw, on raising my head, the entire forest

literally covered with wild cattle. I returned to the rock, as a meeting with these most dangerous animals on an impracticable path like this was not desirable, and, hanging the bridle over a branch, I again ascended the height in order to convince myself in what direction the cattle were going. The herd passed me, bound westward; and I am certain I saw over three hundred head pass.

From this point gradually rose a bald, desolate mountain-range that ran from east to west, and whose base was covered with bad grass and a few scattered granite rocks. I might calculate on wandering about there for weeks before again reaching watered valleys. Hence I resolved to alter my course and go farther east, until I reached the mountains which were the source of all the streams I had lately crossed, and return home along their base.

It was already noon; and I was still on the outside of the forest, when I noticed a tolerably beaten path in an angle where the forest jutted out farther into the mountains. I was very glad of it. I threw my leathern jacket over the saddle, hung my hat by its side, and followed the path which ran between the rocks that rose among the trees and led deeper into the forest.

Suddenly a sound reached my ear resembling the fall of distant water; and the nearer I drew, the more distinct it became. It was possible that the river here took a wide curve to the foot of the mountains; and I greeted it with delight. I soon saw that I was not mistaken; for, on turning a large rock, I stood close in front of a waterfall, which aroused my admiration both through the peculiarity of its shape and the refreshing coolness that it spread far and wide beneath the shady trees. A powerful mountain torrent, about thirty yards wide, fell over an immense rock twenty feet high, down upon another rock, which had been

hollowed to a depth of about three feet by the water which had fallen on it for centuries, and formed a basin, over whose front the agitated foaming stream dashed at a height of about forty feet over widely scattered masses of rocks and aged trees suspended between them, while on either side enormously lofty trees laid their thick crowns together over the roaring cataract, and repulsed the inquisitive sunbeams. I soon stripped Czar, and hobbled him, lit a small fire, put the coffee-pot on it, and lay down on my blanket close to the fall, in order to make a sketch of it.

When I was sufficiently rested, I went up to the basin, undressed, and leapt into the foaming water. I remained till about five o'clock at this Diana's bath, as I christened it; and it is known by that name to all the hunters who have since visited it. It was too early, however, for me to camp; hence I mounted my horse, and rode up once more to bid adieu to the cataract.

Far through the forest I was followed by the roaring of the fall, till the rustling of the river I was approaching overpowered it. At about one hour before sunset, I reached the prairie at the southern end of the forest, and until night-fall followed its skirt in an easterly direction, till I reached a spot where the stream emerged from it. I camped here, quite concealed, and on the next day rode eastward towards the mountains. From this point, I altered my course to the south, and rode there for several days. One afternoon, when greatly troubled by thirst, I reached a pleasant grass valley, on which several mosquito-trees grew: a fresh stream wound through the verdant bottom, and a few deer were grazing on either bank. I dismounted to refresh myself with the eagerly desired draught, and grant my horse a little rest. A very large deer was standing over two hundred yards off, and staring intently at me. I was well

stocked with meat ; but the query whether I could hit it led me away as it had so often done, and, while sitting on the bank, I fired at it. The deer bled, ran a short distance in a circle, and then fell lifeless on the ground. After reloading, I went up to it to fetch the fillet ; and, while engaged in fastening it to my saddle, I noticed two foot Indians, one armed with a rifle, the other with bow and arrows, come out from behind some bushes, and advance some twenty yards before they caught sight of me. I saw their terror and amazement, and that one of them crossed his arms on his breast, and laid his arms on his shoulders, which, among them, is a sign of friendship. I made them a signal to be off, and assured them of my friendly sentiments in the same way. Upon which they described a large circle round me, and escaped from sight a long way down the stream. I felt convinced that several of their tribe were hunting in the vicinity, as they must have heard my shot, and would assuredly not have emerged so carelessly from behind the bushes, had they not believed it was fired by one of their comrades. I put Czar at a sharp amble, as the grass was not high, and hurried down into the valley, while carefully looking round in order to escape this menacing place.

About sunset I reached another small stream, where I halted, lit a fire, and prepared my supper, while Czar was enjoying his. Here I rested till night had set in ; then saddled again, filled my gourd, and rode on for about five miles. Here I led my horse into a thicket which ran between two steep hillocks, and remained in it during the night. It was very probable that the Indians had informed their comrades of the presence of a pale-face, and that they had followed me to my camp-fire, but had been unable to strike my trail in the darkness.

From this point, my journey was for several days a most

fatiguing and far from pleasant one. I constantly went up and down barren, stony hills, and found scarce grass enough to feed my horse: we also both suffered from the want of water, which was the more perceptible on the bare, heated rocks.

I at length again reached the limestone region: but I must have been a great deal too far east; for the mountain-chain was much lower than at the spot where I had crossed it. This view was soon confirmed when I went down into the valley, and found all the streams I crossed small and insignificant. The country continually became more pleasant and rich, the valleys grew broader, and the vegetation was more luxuriant, than in the desolate melancholy ravines I had been lately riding along. I daily expected to see well-known mountains, and looked about more especially for a very high point on a mountain-chain on which the Indians had built a pyramid of large stones.

One morning I had just left camp, and was riding through an extensive prairie, when I fancied I could recognize this landmark, and convinced myself, by the aid of my glass, that I was not mistaken. I felt myself at home again, although this point was a good day's journey from my house: still, I knew in what direction my road lay, and eagerly went along it.

Late at night, I rode along the bank of a river, which I took for one of the western arms of Turkey Creek; and was forced to halt, and pass the night here, by the numerous rocks that rose from the tall grass and ferns. The next morning I passed the spot where I crossed the river with the unfortunate Kreger, by means of the trunk of the tree; and at noon, reached the camp where the storm had treated us so ill. The revived memory of the unhappy man was very painful to me; and I hurried from the spot, in order

to get rid of the blood-stained picture of the scalped naturalist. I now came again into my own hunting-grounds, where nearly every tree and shrub reminded me of a fine chase; and my desire for home, and my faithful Trusty, urged me on. I rode late into the night, till I reached, at ten o'clock, a camping-place, where I and Czar had often stopped before. It was evident that the sensible creature recognized his home, and again sought the same spot to rest, where he had before stretched his beautiful limbs.

When day broke, I rose from my blanket with a feeling resembling that I felt on my birthday when a child; but soon wretched doubts forced themselves on me, whether I should find my little colony all right. Czar, on this day, was washed extra clean; all the beards of the turkeys I had shot on the tour were fastened on the bridle; the beautiful skin of the tiger, shot on the mountains, was laid over the panther-skin to display it in the best way; and I then continued my ride towards the fort, which I hoped to reach at noon, with a joyously beating heart. The grass however, was so high, and rendered going so fatiguing for my horse, that I advanced but slowly, and did not reach our first resting-place at the commencement of the tour till noon. Czar was very hot and tired, so I did not ride on, as I had intended, but unsaddled, and boiled coffee, while the horse was reposing in the shady grass. When the greatest heat was passed, and I had washed Czar down in the stream, I started again homewards, and saw, as the sun was setting, my beloved virgin forest appear above the prairie, and the two immense poplars indicating the spot where the buffalo-path that led to my settlement entered the forest. It was about ten miles off, so that I could calculate on reaching home by nightfall without any great effort.

I had ridden through a small wood, and had advanced into the prairie some hundred yards, when I noticed, on my left, at about a mile distance, five horse Indians emerge from a clump of oaks. Their horses were going at what is called a dog-trot, although it seemed to be increased or diminished according to Czar's pace. I looked at them through my glass, and saw that only two of them had bows and the other three were unarmed. As their appearance did not cause me any apprehension, I quietly followed my road at a gentle walk. We constantly came nearer; and I soon saw that the Indians designed to meet me on the path. I therefore held my horse in, so that they reached the path when I was about one hundred yards distant from them. They stopped; and, when they saw that I did the same, one of the armed men turned his horse towards me, and rode a few paces nearer. I made signs to them to go their way; and, when I saw they had no result, I leapt from my horse, and raised my rifle, again intimating to them to ride on. They now shouted to me, "Kitchi, Kitchi, Delaware, Delaware!" the names of friendly tribes, and at the same time made the signals of amity. I, however, signalled to them again, and raised my rifle to my shoulder; upon which, they spoke together, and went up the hill very slowly, one behind the other, till I lost sight of them.

The suspicions which I entertained of all Indians induced me also to ride up the hill to see what had become of them. To my great surprise, I saw them a long distance ahead, galloping across the prairie. This sudden haste could not be explained through fear of me. It must have another cause which I could only find in the fact that their camp was no great distance off; and that they wished to inform their tribe of my presence, so as to cut me off on the

prairie, and lay wait for me in the woods on the Leone. From the direction they followed, if the tribe were encamped no great distance from the path that led into the wood, they could get there before me ; whence I soon made up my mind, and galloped off to another ford of the Leone, about twenty miles higher up. Czar galloped nearly the whole distance ; and I reached the forest before sunset. I was now safe, for no one could pass through the wood on horseback ; and the narrow buffalo-path could be easily defended. I reached the Leone, welcomed it with heartfelt joy, and hurried down the opposite bank, towards my home. About three miles from it, I had to cross a hill, whence I could see my fort. I approached its crest with a loudly beating heart ; because I must here obtain certainty as to the fate of my settlement.

I looked across the valley ; and, on the other side, I saw the fort glistening through the gloom. A heavy load fell from my heart : I took my glass ; every thing was quiet ; the smoke rose straight from the kitchen ; and, suddenly, two of my dogs ran up from the river, and disappeared, through the palisades, into the interior of the fort. Czar, too, knew perfectly well that he was going home ; for, though I had ridden him unusually hard, he kept up his amble, while usually, when he was tired, he had a habit of stopping, and biting the grass.

It had grown very dark when I rode up the last hill, to my fort, and was received by the loud barking of my dogs which dashed through the holes in the palisades. But all their voices were overpowered by Trusty's bass from the interior of the building. The dogs soon recognized me ; and, springing up to Czar, expressed their delight at my return by loud whining. I now raised my hunting-cry, which was responded to by Trusty tugging furiously at his

chain, and a hearty welcome from my garrison. The chain of the gate fell, and Trusty flew out and up at me, so that I was hardly able to keep my feet under his demonstrations of delight. My three comrades received me most heartily, and strove to show how much they were attached to me. My horses and mules raised their voices from the interior of the fort; and Czar answered them by his friendly whinnies.

When the first greeting was over, my three men asked almost simultaneously, "But where is Mr. Kreger?" I pointed to heaven, and intimated, by a short "by and by," that I would tell them all about it presently. Czar was soon liberated from his burden, rolled himself heartily at his old place in the grass, and consoled himself with his long-absent maize-leaves, while I doffed my travelling accoutrements indoors, and made myself comfortable by a wash, and change of dress. We were soon seated round the old table at supper, at which I refreshed myself with a draught of fresh milk; and then I described the unhappy fate of my companion Kreger. An almost unanimous "Did I not foretell it?" burst at the end of my narrative from the lips of my comrades, who all felt great sympathy in the unhappy man's fate.

CHAPTER X.

THE BEE-HUNTER.

I WAS the first to rise from my bed when day broke, and went forth to enjoy the cooling breeze. Czar was not yet awake, and merely raised his head a little from the ground, gazing at me with his glorious eyes as if he wished to say that it was too soon to rise, and then laid his head down on the ground again, and accepted my patting without stirring.

After breakfast I saddled the cream-color, for which the saddle-girths had grown much too tight, and rode with one of my men and Trusty to the other side of the river, towards the old buffalo-path that led to the prairie; we reached the skirt of the wood, and had not ridden far through it, when Trusty, who was ahead, stopped and looked up at me. I dismounted, and perceived a number of foot-steps made by moccasins. A little farther on, the grass was trampled down by a great number of horse's hoofs. My foreboding was then confirmed. The entire Indian tribe had laid wait for me in the woods; and I should certainly have fallen a victim to their treachery if my good star had not warned me of their design. I silently thanked my guardian angel, who had already led me through so many dangers, and rode back to the fort, which I reached shortly before noon, with a very fat deer I had shot on passing through the wood, and which hung across my comrade's saddle.

A few days' rest at home did me a wonderful deal of

good ; and I felt remarkably comfortable. Early one morning, I was engaged in shoeing Czar's forefeet (as I always kept a stock of shoes and nails by me), after which I returned to my room to write letters, as I intended to send one of my men in a few days with commissions to the nearest settlement. I had been writing about half an hour, with Trusty lying under the table in the middle of the room, when the door opened, and I, of course, expected it was one of my people. Trusty, however, sprang up, barking, from under the table, and pulled me down as I tried to hold him back by the tail. In an instant, the furious animal leaped at the throat of a stranger dressed in leather, who came into the room with a long Kentucky rifle, pulled him down, and would certainly have killed him in a few minutes if I had not thrust my hands between the dog's jaws, and forced them open, though his teeth were buried deep in my fingers.

With all my strength I lay on the desperate dog ; and my men dragged the stranger out of the door, while I was scarce able to hold back the animal, which leaped up madly at the closed door. I hurried out to the stranger, in whom I recognized a bee-hunter, who had paid me a visit about a year previously. He was seriously hurt, though not mortally, as it seemed. I at once took him into the house ; continually applied cold bandages, and nursed him as well as I could during the four days he remained with me. Then I discharged him, after stocking him amply with powder and ball, coffee and salt, needles, thread, and other articles, and begging him, when he next visited me, to knock at my door first. I was very anxious not to have these bee-hunters against me, as they might prove even more dangerous than savages. They are generally scape-gallows from the States, and live in the desert with their horse and rifle by hunting, and collecting honey and wax ;

the former of which they pack in fresh-sewn deer-hides, and carry it with the wax and peltry to the Indian settlements, for the purpose of selling or swapping. He left me perfectly contented, and with assurances of gratitude and friendship; and I was very glad to get rid of this unbidden guest.

One evening, as the sun was setting, I felt the necessity of hearing the crack of my rifle. I rode down the river to a small pond on the prairie, which was filled with rain-water in the winter and retained it till far into the summer. Strangely enough, all animals prefer this water to any other, and will go a long distance to drink it. I led Czar into the bushes, threw his bridle over a branch, and sat down on the edge of the forest, upon the roots of an old oak, waiting for the game that might come to water.

It was growing dark when a herd of deer came across the prairie, and posted themselves on a hill behind the pond. They were all rather large; but one of them had antlers far larger than the rest. After a short halt, they advanced up to the water-hole, with the big deer at their head. It had drunk, and was raising its head with the mighty antlers, when I pulled the trigger; and the bullet struck behind the shoulder-blade. He ran away from the other deer to a broad, rather deep ravine, formed by the torrents, and which gradually grew narrower. I mounted Czar, after reloading, and rode after the deer, which suddenly rose before me, and leaped up the steep wall of the ravine. It was already very dark, and I was afraid of losing the deer; hence I called Trusty to follow it. Nothing could please him better; he ran after it up the wall, and pursued it into the prairie with loud barking. As the spot was too steep for me, I ran back; and, when I reached the prairie lower down, I saw the deer proceeding towards the woods, and two dogs instead of one following it. I gave Czar the

reins in order to cut the deer off; but Trusty caught it at the moment, and the supposed second dog, an enormous white wolf, attacked my dog. All three lay atop of each other, when I leaped from my horse within shot, and hurried to the scene of action. The wolf noticed me, and tried to bolt; but Trusty held it tightly, and I ran within ten paces of them. The two animals were leaping up savagely at each other, when my bullet passed through the wolf's side, and Trusty settled it. The deer, which had thirty tines, had got up again, but soon fell on a leap from Trusty, and I killed it. I then rode home, fetched a two-wheeled cart drawn by a mule, drove out with one of my men, and brought back the deer and the wolf, whose skin, though not so fine as in winter, still made an excellent carpet under our dining-table.

There was nothing to do now in the fields; hence we seldom went there; and our visits were limited to one of us crossing the river at daybreak in a canoe hollowed out of a monstrous poplar, and walking round the field with a fowling-piece, in order to put a check to the countless squirrels which sprang over the fence to reach the forest at daybreak, partly because they did great damage to the young maize, partly because they supplied an excellent dish for breakfast.

I was taking this walk one morning round the field, when I saw on the railings at the hinder end several whole stalks hanging, and found one on the ground in the forest. I went into the field, and found large spaces where all the stalks had been pulled up and carried off, but could not recognize a trail on the soil, which was thickly overgrown with weeds and grass. I followed the trail into the forest, and found, at no great distance from the first maize-stalk, a footprint on the ground, which seemed made only with the

heel, and which I took for a moccason. The maize, however, was not ripe yet, and not even large enough for boiling; and hence it seemed to me improbable that Indians had carried off the plants. I sought farther, and soon found a quite distinct enormous bear's footprint, which indicated the thief more clearly. When evening came, I and one of my men seated ourselves in the maize with Trusty, on a couple of chairs we carried there. I had my large double-barrel loaded with pistol-bullets, and my comrade a double rifle. We sat for a long time, as the moon shone now and then; but at length we grew tired of waiting, and I got up to go home, but at the same moment fancied I could hear the crackling of drift-wood. I fell back on my chair; at the same moment, the railing in front of me grew dark, and almost immediately Bruin appeared with his broad chest, and peered about in all directions. Piff! paff! I let fly both barrels at him: he disappeared behind the railing; and we could hear him dashing through the wood. We went home; and on the next morning at daybreak, we followed the trail along which Trusty led us to the dead bear, which had only run a mile. Its fat and meat fully compensated for the damage it had effected in the field.

One morning my men were busily engaged in hanging up the dried meat in the smoke-house, when one of them came running up to me, and informed me that a herd of buffaloes was coming up close to the garden on the river. I seized my rifle and darted out, shouting to my men to keep back the dogs, but to let them all loose when I waved my handkerchief. I ran out of the fort, and in a stooping posture along a prairie hollow, in order to get before the buffaloes, which were marching two and two in a long row up from the river to the prairie, and lay down in the long grass under an elevation for which they were steering. I had been

lying there but a few minutes when the first bulls appeared on the heights ; and I shot one of them, though without showing myself. The buffalo stopped, sank on its knees, and fell over, while the others gathered round it, looked at it for a long time, and then tried to make it get up by pushing it with their horns. If you do not show yourself, you can in this way kill a great number of these animals, as they are not frightened by the sound of a rifle.

After reloading, I rose on one knee and shot a second, which I hit in the knee, however, instead of behind the shoulder. I saw that it had noticed me ; for it turned round, and, with its head down, dashed upon me from the heights. I sprang up, and waved my handkerchief, and then threw myself full-length in a narrow gully, while the hunting-cry of my people in the fort reached my ear ; and I recognized Trusty's voice among my dogs.

I heard the thunder of the savage bull approaching me, as it made the ground shake under me ; and I looked up, expecting every minute to see the monster leap over me ; but, when it was within about twenty yards of me, it stopped with a terrible roar, as it had lost me, and now saw my dogs dashing up the valley like unchained furies. Prince Albert, one of my young bloodhounds, was the foremost, and behind him came Lady Elssler, his bitch, both equally fast and courageous. They dashed past me. I rose, and now came Trusty with his mouth wide open, furious that another dog should dare to assault the enemy before him. My hunting-cry echoed far over the prairie, where the two bloodhounds hung by the thick hide of the infuriated buffalo on its wounded side, while Trusty pinned its monstrous muzzle, in which he buried his fangs, which never loosed their hold.

The buffalo fell back a few paces, and then rose, with

Trusty still hanging to its snout, on its colossal hind-legs, snorting furiously. I could not shoot, on account of the dog; and the raging brute dashed over the prairie, holding Trusty in the air, who only every now and then was able to touch the ground with his feet. Ere long, however, the whole pack had caught up with the fugitives; and the brave dogs hung like leeches from the buffalo's shaggy coat. Still it dashed on with them towards the river, at a spot where the bank was forty feet high.

I looked after them with terror, for there was no doubt but that the buffalo would dash over; and, in that case, most of my dogs, and Trusty more especially, would be buried beneath it. A few more leaps, and they would have reached the precipice; but at this moment the monster rose in the air, and turned over, covered by my dogs. It roared and raged, till the sound echoed through the forest, but was unable to get on its fore-legs again, because Trusty kept its head pinned down to the ground. I could hardly breathe when I reached the buffalo: I held my rifle to its broad forehead, and sent a bullet through its hard skull. The fight was at an end; and Trusty came up to me, panting, and wagging his tail, while he looked up to me as much as to say that it had been a tough job. He limped a little; and Leo, a very brave dog, had a considerable wound between the ribs; but none of the others were hurt.

We returned to the fort, and were preparing to fetch the meat in the cart, when we saw a horseman coming down the river, who soon dismounted at the gate, and walked up to me with a pleasant good-morning, and shook my hand. He was indubitably the handsomest man I had ever seen; and the beauty of his form was heightened by his tight-fitting and neatly made leathern dress.

Without asking him who he was, I gave him the hearty

welcome which his amiability claimed, led him to the dining-room, had his luggage brought into the fort, and his horse put in a stall and supplied with maize-leaves. Then a breakfast was set before my guest; and after begging him, in the old Spanish fashion, to make my house his home, I apologized for being obliged to leave him a little while, as I had shot some buffaloes close by, which I wanted to get home.

"Will you allow me to assist you? I am a good hand at it," was his reply. He had soon finished his breakfast, and went with me out of the fort to the river-bank where the buffalo lay. Although I had introduced Trusty to the stranger, the dog still pressed between him and me, which he noticed and remarked.

"You have a fine hound there, who has grown up in the desert. I have heard of him before. He is no friend of bee-hunters, and yet he does not seem savage with me."

I begged him not to touch Trusty, as he might misunderstand it, and we soon reached my quarry. The stranger, whose name was Warden, as he told me, laid aside his leathern jacket, which was tastily ornamented with fringe, turned up his shirt-sleeves, displaying thus his finely formed muscular and white arms, and drew a splendid hunting-knife from its sheath. We set to work together in skinning the buffalo, in which operation Warden displayed a remarkable skill, then broke it up; and, while my people carried the meat to the fort, we proceeded to the other buffalo higher up the prairie, and prepared it in the same way for removal.

After supper, while we were lying on the grass on the river-bank, my guest told me that he was a native of Missouri, the son of a farmer, but had been compelled by unfortunate circumstances to quit home, and had been living for five years as a desert-hunter. At first he remained on

the frontiers of his own State ; but the cold winters had continually driven him to the south, until he at last got so far down to a country whose climate agreed better with him. He remained a whole week with me, and made himself useful during the day through his skill in making all sorts of trifles ; while in the evening he described in a most lively manner the numerous dangers he had fortunately escaped, and the many fights he had had with the redskins during the five years. .

CHAPTER XI.

THE WILD HORSE.

THE departure of Warden was very painful to me ; and the evenings, which I generally spent alone, grew very long, as I had before gossipped half the night away with him. Hence I went to bed early, and followed my old habit of rising before daybreak. I generally took my rifle, went with Trusty across the river to the forest, and watched for game.

I was cautiously walking one morning along this my favorite spot, and inhaling the thousand perfumes which had filled the recesses of the forest during the tranquil night, avoiding every dry branch for fear of startling its denizens, while Trusty followed at a short distance all my windings round the bushes and fallen trees. It had become tolerably light, when I fancied I heard a rustling at an open spot, in the centre of which stood several very large pecan-nut trees. I stood still for a moment and listened, holding my breath, for a repetition of the noise. I heard it again, like the breaking of twigs ahead of me, but, in spite of my utmost efforts, could not perceive that even a leaf was moving.

Once again the same breaking and rustling reached me ; and, on looking up accidentally, I saw a thick, black lump shining among the foliage of the pecan-trees. I soon distinguished a young bear busily engaged in drawing to it

with its long paws the thin branches of the nut-tree, and putting the unripe nuts in its mouth. I quickly sprang under the tree, so as to make sure of the bear, which was about the size of a sheep; but I remembered its mamma, who might be in the neighborhood, and easily come up to fetch her pet home. I stationed myself under the tree on which the cub was, and made Trusty lie down by my side, as he was beginning to growl, and pressing his nose against the tree.

The bear saw me, and became greatly alarmed; sprang from one branch to the other, and looked timidly down to me. I did not move, but listened carefully to every sound in the vicinity, while my neighbor came down to the first floor, above my head; and, sitting among the lowest branches, produced a cry like that of little children. It soon repeated its wail, and I heard far away in the forest a hob, hob, hob, coming towards me. I sprang up, and placed myself behind the trees, after again forcing Trusty's head into the grass. I distinctly distinguished by the leaps that it was an old bear hastening to the help of her cub. I pointed my rifle in the direction whence it was coming, and suddenly it parted the foliage in front of me with its broad shoulders, whereupon I gave a loud "pst." In a second the bear sat up on its hind-quarters; and, as the fire flashed from my barrel, it made a couple of leaps towards me, but was rolled over by a second bullet through the head, while I shouted a "Down, sir!" to Trusty, who was on the point of springing up. I drew a revolver, ran up to the old bear, and sent a bullet through her brain, as she was still furiously hitting out with her terrible paws.

I next reloaded my rifle, and looked up at my neighbor, who had fled to the top of the tree, and was swinging with the branches. I called Trusty away from under the tree,

bade him lie down in the grass behind me, and gave the cub something which brought it down like a ball, crashing through the foliage to the ground, when I put the other barrel to its forehead, and stopped its young bearish existence. After reloading, I broke it up, to give Trusty his share of the spoil,—the kidneys, the only bear-meat he ever touched unless he was very hungry. I then hastened home; and, after breakfast, I went back to the forest with one of my men and three mules, when we broke up the old bear, and carried the meat home on two of the animals, and the cub entire on the third.

Thus several weeks passed, during which I went little beyond the immediate vicinity of my house, in order to lay in our stock of meat either in the morning or evening, when the heat was less oppressive. During the day we were cutting steps in the perpendicular river-bank, out of which a very strong spring gushed about ten feet from the top, and building a small dairy over it.

After finishing my job, most of my stores were nearly expended, and I required a number of new tools. Hence I went myself to the nearest settlement, sold there my stock of hides, honey, wax, and tallow, and took home the articles I needed on my pack animals. While at the settlement, I met, at the store-keeper's with whom I was bargaining, a Mexican lad, sixteen years of age, who had accompanied a brace of mules brought here from Mexico for sale, and had remained as waiter at the hotel. His name was Antonio; and he offered to go with me and stop. He was recommended to me by an acquaintance as a first-rate horseman and lassoer; and, as he pleased me in other respects, I accepted his offer, and he rode with me home.

Antonio's skill in riding was extraordinary: it was all the same to him whether he had a bridle or not, whether

he sat in a saddle or bare-backed; once on the animal's back, no rearing or kicking could throw him.

He also threw the lasso with a master hand. I have frequently seen him at full gallop catch a mule by the foot which I indicated.

Between the fort and the mountain-spring there were always a great number of wild horses, especially in the vicinity of a considerable elevation on the prairie, whose highest point was covered with a small, very thick wood, where a white stallion resided with his harem. Owing to his beauty and noble blood, the Indians revered this animal with superstitious fear. The hunters had tried for years in vain to capture him, and the bards of America had raised him to immortality in their ballads and narrations.

I have seen and admired this horse a countless number of times, as my hunts so frequently passed in his region, and quite as often I have yearned to possess, and revolved the means to get him into my power. This was one of the reasons why I took Antonio into my service.

The mare was now treated with very great attention, both as regards food and cleanliness and exercise: she had no more grass, and the corn given her was previously sifted. She was ridden every morning by Antonio; and the distance she had to gallop was daily increased. Then she was led about for about half an hour, and, when brought back to her stall, rubbed down till she was quite dry and cool. Towards evening she was taken out again for half an hour's walk, and before she went to rest had a douche or a swim in the river. In a fortnight she hardly turned a hair after galloping several miles; she had grown thinner, but her flesh was firmer, and her golden-brown hair so fine that every vein could be traced under the skin. In the mean while, Antonio had been practising with the lasso, and had

horribly tormented my mules with this disagreeable instrument.

The preparations lasted three weeks ; after which, on a cool morning, we left the fort, — Antonio riding a mule and leading Fancy, one of my colonists on the cream-color, and I on Czar, in order to seek the stallion, and, if possible, deprive him of liberty. It was one of those days — not rare in our country — when the sky is covered with a thin stratum of clouds, which deprive it of its glorious azure, and which, though it does not conceal the sun, breaks the power of its beams. At the same time there was a breeze, so that the day was more like autumn than summer. We rode down the river, and soon saw the height emerge from the prairie, in whose vicinity the stallion usually had his headquarters. Our horses were very active ; Czar coquetted by the side of his lady friend, Fancy, in his most elegant prancing movements ; shook his bit, and snorted through his moist nostrils, while turning his dark, large eyes towards the lady ; Fancy, conscious of her noble breed, walked delicately along, and carefully selected the foot-paths.

While still some distance off, I noticed to the side of the wood on the knoll a dark patch, which I recognized through my glass as horses, but could not make certain whether it was our stallion's family. We approached slowly, and from every new height distinguished more clearly the shape of the animals. I had no doubt about it being the troop we were in search of, although I could not yet notice the stallion. A broad valley still lay between us when we halted ; and I saw through my glass the snow-white creature rise from the grass and look across at us, while many horses of the troop still lay on the ground around him. We rode down into the valley ; the stallion stood motionless and gazed at

us, but when we reached the bottom, he suddenly trotted about among his troop. All the horses lying on the grass leapt up, looked at us, formed into a body, and dashed at a gallop over the heights.

Antonio now sprang into Fancy's saddle, gave his mule to our companion, took the lasso in his right hand, and only waited for my signal to give his horse her head. The stallion came towards us at a swinging trot, while we moved forward at a fast pace, and bent low over our horses' necks. A finer picture could not be painted. He carried his small head high; long white locks floated over his broad forehead, and his long mane danced up and down at every step, while he raised his tail straight out, and its long curling milk-white hairs fluttered in the breeze. His broad back glistened as if carved out of Carrara marble; and his powerful shoulders and thighs were supported on graceful little feet.

I rode behind Antonio. The stallion was not fifty yards from us when I shouted to the Mexican, "Forward!" and Fancy flew at such a pace towards the stallion that she came within five yards of him ere he recovered from his terror. The moment for his fate to be decided had arrived. He turned round, and made an enormous leap ahead, that showed me the flat of his hind-hoofs, while he held his head aside, and looked back after his pursuer. The lasso flew through the air, the noose fell over the stallion's head, but it hung on one side of his muzzle; and the next instant the lasso was trailing on the ground behind Fancy. The stallion seemed to know that it was a fetter which had touched him, for he shot away from the man like lightning. Antonio coiled up the lasso again, and followed him over hill and vale, over grass and bowlders, at full gallop, just as the tornado darts from the mountain into the plain. Czar was beside himself at the idea of being last; but I

purposely held him back, partly not to excite the mare, partly to save his strength. There was still a hope that the stallion, living as he did on grass, would not keep his wind so long as our horses ; and, though he was now several hundred yards ahead, we might be able to catch him up. Up to this point, however, we had not gained an inch upon him ; and our horses were covered with foam, though both still in good wind.

We had been following the stallion for about two hours when he turned off to the mountains, and flew up them with undiminished speed. The ground now became very stony and unsafe ; but he seemed to be as much at home on it as on the soft grass-land he had just left. He reached the summit between two steep mountains, and disappeared from our sight behind them. We dashed past the spot where we had seen him last ; but the noble creature had reached the steep wall on the other side of the valley when we dashed down into it.

I saw plainly that he had a difficulty in keeping at a gallop on this steep incline. We gained a deal of ground down hill and through the grassy valley, and reached the wall before the stallion was at the top of it. Full of hope, I could no longer remain in the background. Digging both spurs into Czar, I flew on, past Fancy, and reached the summit to find the stallion trotting scarce fifty yards ahead of me. Fancy was close behind me ; and I shouted to Antonio to follow me. But my cry seemed to have poured fresh strength through the brave fugitive's veins ; for he dashed down into the valley, leaving behind the white foam with which he was covered, at every bound he made on the rocky ground. Once again I drew nearer, and was only forty yards from him, when I saw ahead of us a yawning *cañon*, out of which the gigantic dry arms of dead cypresses

emerged. Here the stallion must turn back, and fall our prey while ascending the hill again.

But he went straight towards the abyss: it was not possible, — he could not leap it. I remained behind him, and, in my terror for the noble creature's life, held my breath. One more bound, and he reached the *cañon*; and with the strength of a lion, and that desperation which only the threatened loss of liberty can arouse, he drew himself together and leapt high in the air across the gap, which was more than forty feet wide.

I turned Czar round towards the hill, and kept my eyes away from the fearful sight, so that I might not see the end of the tragedy; but Antonio uttered a cry, and I heard the word "over." I looked round, and saw the stallion rising on his hind-legs upon the opposite deeper bank; and, after a glance at us, he trotted off quite sound down the ravine, and disappeared behind the nearest rock.

We stopped, leapt from our horses, and looked at each other for a long time in silence; then I solemnly vowed never to make another attempt to deprive this princely animal of liberty. Our horses were in a very excited condition; the water poured down them in streams, and the play of their lungs was so violent that they tottered on their legs. We let them draw breath a little, and then led them slowly back to the mountain-springs, where we intended to give them a rest ere we returned home. In the afternoon we reached the spot, excessively fatigued, and found there our comrade, who greeted us with a regretful "That was a pity!" and had already spread our dinner on a horse-cloth.

We stopped here till the evening, and then started for the fort, which we reached late at night.

CHAPTER XII

THE PRAIRIE FIRE.

THE summer passed away amid sporting pleasures, which, though they always consist of very monotonous events and results, still do not lose their charm for the man who feels a true passion for the chase.

We had been busily engaged for a week in making some machinery on the river by which to employ the water-power in turning a mill to grind the maize.

Owing to this I had not gone out much ; and we were all longing for good fresh meat. As there were a good many buffaloes in the very neighborhood, I resolved to hunt them on the morning after our mill was finished, as one of my men had seen large herds during the day on the prairie across the river. The morning arrived, but with it sprang up a very violent westerly wind ; and a few light, straggling clouds proved that it would not sink in such a hurry. In doubt whether to ride out or wait another day, my men persuaded me to the former course, as the chase would probably be soon over. Hence I rode off, but left Trusty at home, as on these prairies the dry grass was extraordinarily high, and it would tire him too much to force his way through it, especially if we had to go quickly. I was soon across in the wood, where, though the wind did not meet me, still it shook the tall trees so terribly that the dry wood constantly whizzed round my head. I reached the prairie

on the other side of the forest, and saw several herds of buffalo in the distance.

Binding my hat firmly under my chin, I rode through the tall grass in a northern direction towards them. The storm grew more violent, and laid the grass so flat on the ground, that I could not think of putting my horse beyond a walk in any other direction than with the wind, as, when the wind is blowing fiercely, all game is usually more cautious than in calm weather, as it has to make up by the sight for what it loses in smell. After several hours of useless exertion I turned to the east, towards a spot on which some scattered oaks grew. Here I fancied it would be easier to approach the game.

The distance to the first tree-covered hill was about five miles : and I saw through my glass, at the elevations behind, a great number of buffaloes, which, however, seemed to be in a strange state of excitement. My horse found it hard walking, owing to the dry grass, in which Czar was compelled to part the sharp tangled stalks at every step. I looked constantly towards the highland, and remarked, while the storm howled past my ears, that the sky was growing obscured, and that the sunshine was not so bright as it had been a few moments previously. I looked around me ; the heavens appeared to be veiled by a gray mist, and grew darker behind me, and on the edge of the prairie were perfectly black. I felt a cold shudder ; for I knew the fearful element which had become allied with the storm, and would roar over the plain, scattering ruin around. The prairie was on fire. It is true that I could not yet see the fire ; but the black smoke-clouds rose higher and higher on the horizon, and the storm soon bore them past me over the last blue patch of sky. Only one chance of escape remained. I must reach a knoll where the grass was shorter ;

and, without reflecting, I gave Czar the spurs and his head, and flew in rivalry of the storm-wind over the grassy plains before me.

Czar ran with long leaps through the tall grass, looking neither to the right nor left. With every moment it grew darker around me ; and the reflection of the spreading sea of flame more and more tinged my horse's snow-white neck. It was not his ordinary strength that urged the horse to reach the knoll, but the force which desperation imparts to men and animals, but soon wears them out and ends in utter exhaustion. The sharp spurs, and the thunder behind him, urged my horse constantly on at a mad speed ; but I felt his bound gradually lose its lightness and force.

I was not far from the hill in front of me : once more the spurs and my shrill hunting-cry ; and I flew up the knoll, and hobbled my trembling, snorting horse on the bare table-land, which was covered with pebbles and thin patches of grass. I ran back to the tall grass with a lucifer in my hand, lit it, and in an instant the flames rose, struggling wildly against the storm, and darted round my hill, till they joined on its eastern side, and dashed along like an avalanche with the howling storm. I now looked back for the first time, holding my brave horse by the bridle, at the fearfully animated plain, and watched the dark living forms hurrying past on either side of the knoll. The whole animal world seemed assembled here, and to be exerting their last strength in escaping a death by fire. On both sides beneath me thundered past in wild confusion herd after herd, — buffaloes, horses, deer, and antelopes were pressed together ; and between them rushed bears, tigers, panthers, and wolves, one after the other, with their faces averted from the glow, which the storm blew with a thick black cloud of ashes over the land. Dark, black night now en-

compassed me : only a pale reddish glare gleamed through the dense ashes. The heat was stifling : I and my horse—who, trembling all over, yielded to his fate—turned our backs to it ; and the stream of fire passed us on both sides, crackling and hissing.

Gradually daylight returned, and the sky became blue over my head. Thousands of large and small predaceous birds followed the flames, and fell now and then in them. On all sides lay the black carcasses of the countless victims which this prairie-fire had destroyed ; and many animals, struggling with death, were rolling in their agony on the plain. Czar and I were completely covered with ashes. I now mounted my horse to get away as quickly as possible from this scene of destruction and death, and reach the green forests of the Leone by the straightest line.

About a mile from the wood on the Leone, I saw, to my great surprise, on my right hand, a very large deer and a horse walking together across the plain to the wood. They tottered along slowly side by side, and seemed not to notice me at all. I rode up to them : I fancied they had been blinded by the fire, but it was not so ; for they now stopped, and gazed at me with their bright eyes, as if imploring me not to prevent them from reaching the wood. Both were slightly scorched, though the horse had lost mane and tail : they appeared to have suffered more from excessive exertion, and to be yearning for the water of the Leone. I could easily have killed the deer ; but I pitied the creature, and besides did not care to eat its hunted flesh, or put a further load on Czar. Hence I quitted the poor creatures, and reached the wood, which is not very broad here, and soon after the river, where Czar refreshed himself for a long time in the cool waters.

It was evening when I reached home, tired, and without

booty. My people had seen, by the smoke which covered the sky over them, that the prairie was on fire; and they were very anxious about me on account of the violent storm. I soon sought my bed, and slept till the sun rose.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DELAWARE INDIAN.

ONE day, after dinner, when we had drunk coffee, my sentry shouted that a party of Indians were coming up the river; and I perceived through my telescope that they must belong to one of the civilized tribes, as they were not armed with lances, and bows and arrows, but with fire-arms, and wore clothes, if we may call them such, consisting of leathern breeches and jackets, and a colored handkerchief wound round the head like a turban. There were ten Indians who halted at the great gate of the palisade which enclosed my fort in a large semicircle, with both its ends joining the river. They shouted, "Captain!" and then gave me to understand that they wished to speak with me. I went out, accompanied by Trusty, with my large gun loaded with slugs on my arm, and found that the men belonged to a tribe of friendly Delaware Indians, whose chief I knew, and who had several times camped in the very neighborhood, and paid me a visit.

They told me they had encamped several miles down the river, where they had arrived on the last evening; their chief had sent them to tell me that the prairie-fire on the previous morning had been caused by the negligence of his men; but that it had spread against their will, and had not been purposely caused. Then they asked whether the chief would be allowed to visit me, and rode back to camp after I had appointed his visit for the morrow.

The next morning, at about seven o'clock, the chief of the Delawares duly rode up with three of his men. They bound their horses by lassos to pickets which they drove into the ground, carried their baggage into the fort, and accepted my invitation to enter the house, where our parlor and kitchen were. Delawares have always been on the most friendly terms with the United-States Government, fought on their side against England, in the War of Liberation, and have assumed a number of customs from the whites. They have, as their property, a district of land on the Kansas, where their villages are situated; and their squaws, children, and old people carry on agriculture and cattle-breeding, while the men, with some of the squaws, hunt in the desert for nine months of the year.

The Delawares are generally good-looking; the men tall and well built, with expressive, marked features, aquiline noses, large dark eyes, long black hair, and not a very reddish-brown complexion. The women are small, but neat and pretty; and, in spite of their darker hue, produce a pleasing impression through their regular, sharply cut features, dark curly hair, and brilliant coal-black eyes. They dress themselves with some degree of taste. Their clothes consist of gayly painted deer-hide ornamented with beads, and the gayest calicoes, which they obtain from the Government trading-posts by bartering peltry for them.

After our guests had taken their places, I lit a pipe, and handed it to the chief, who, after taking some twenty pulls at it, passed it to his next man; and so it went from hand to hand, or rather from mouth to mouth, till it returned to me. During this ceremony of the pipe of peace, not a word was spoken; but the chief now broke the silence. After puffing out a portion of the swallowed smoke in a dense cloud from his lips and nostrils, he told me they were the

best friends of the white men, and would remain so, and intended to stay for some weeks in the neighborhood for the purpose of hunting. I assured them that we entertained the same feelings towards them, and that I intended to pay them a return visit at their camp.

After this, dinner was served up, which they greatly enjoyed. They behaved with great propriety at it, were acquainted with the use of knives and forks; and it could be seen by their conduct that they frequently came into contact with white men. After dinner, the chief imparted to me, that his people wished to have a deal with me, and swap tanned deer and antelope skins for powder, lead, and flints. I told him I should be delighted, and should expect them in the afternoon. One of them, who called himself "Black Tiger," pleased me remarkably. He was a young, good-looking man, of about eighteen, tall, thin, with an open, kindly face, and displayed great animation and conversational powers for an Indian. He spoke English very well, and seemed much attached to me, which he repeatedly told me, and at last displayed more fully by expressing a wish to remain with me. I took it for a joke, laughed, and told him, that, in that case, I would build him a house for himself, and give him every thing he wished to have.

They then rode away, after indicating the position of the sun when they intended to return in the afternoon for the purpose of making the barter. At about four, P.M., some twenty Delawares dismounted in front of the fort, and displayed their wares on the prairie. No tribe prepares hides so finely as this one; and I was very glad to obtain a number of them for use by myself and my men, as we made our clothes out of them, and were unable to prepare them so handsomely ourselves. The exchange was soon arranged to mutual satisfaction, although I had given but little pow-

der, lead, flints, and pressed tobacco in proportion. The chief was presented with a small portion of the above articles, as is the custom on such occasions; and then the whole party followed me into the fort, where I regaled them with coffee and bread.

When they prepared to depart, the chief told me that one of his men, Black Tiger, would stop with me, as I had offered to build him a house, and give him every thing he required. He would, in return, be a very good friend to me; and he (the chief) would hear, on his return in the following year, whether he remained a Delaware. I saw now that it was no jest, and replied that I would be a good friend to him as to all the Delawares. On parting, I gave him the assurance that I would visit them next morning at their camp. Black Tiger remained behind in great delight, carried his saddle and pack into the fort, placed his long rifle and hunting-pouch in the parlor, and then came to me, begging I would build him the promised house. I intimated to him that this would take some time; but, in the mean while, I would give him a handsome tent. I fetched a very large white and red striped marquee, and asked him where I should put it up for him. He pointed out a spot at the eastern end of the fence, under an elm-tree, on the slope over the river; and, when I told him that I locked the fort-gate at night, he laughed, and replied, that, in that case, he would shut up his house too.

He was quite beside himself with joy when the handsome tent was up, and the long red, white, and blue American pennant floated over it. He now refused to have another house, as this one was much finer than mine. A trench was dug round the tent to carry off the rain-water; and the ground inside was covered with some buffalo-hides, after which Tiger carried in his baggage and weapons, quite de-

lighted with his house. In order to delight him even more, I hung upon the tent-post a looking-glass, put in a chair, and gave my young friend a gay-colored silk handkerchief, with which he bound his fine black hair on the right side of his head, and let the end hang over his shoulder. After supper, my new guest went to his tent; and, when we closed the fort, a merry fire was still blazing before it, behind which he sat on his stool, and smoked a short pipe which I had also given him.

The next morning, almost before sunrise, I went to Tiger, and saw him turning some spits at the fire, on which he had placed the breast of a turkey, while by his side lay another young cock, which, as he said, he had fetched for me. He had been hunting on the other side of the river, to which he had crossed in my canoe. An hour after, he came to breakfast with me, and enjoyed it heartily, especially the milk and bread. Then he went to his tent, and slept till I called him to ride with me to the camp of his tribe.

I had mounted Czar, and one of my men the cream-color, when my young Tiger rode up to us in full costume. The lower part of his face, from the corners of his mouth to the ear-tips, was painted pure red with vermilion; from this a black stripe ran to the eyes, while the edges of the eyelids were again thickly daubed with vermilion. His hair, fastened with the silk handkerchief, hung over his shoulders; and in front of his chest he had hung from a leathern thong the looking-glass from his tent, which completely covered it. He glowed with pride and joy, and was of opinion that his brothers in camp would stare when they saw him with these splendid things.

Tiger was mounted on a magnificent piebald, with an enormous black mane and tail. The saddle was of wood,

and home manufacture, and from it hung two large wooden stirrups by leathern straps. Over the saddle lay a shaggy buffalo-hide, under which the tomahawk, fastened to the saddle-bow, and a rolled-up lasso, peeped out. The bridle was composed of leathern straps fastened under the horse's jaw with a slipknot; and vermilion-dyed strips of deer-hide were plaited in the mane. The long single rifle hung downwards over Tiger's left shoulder, while he laid his powerful fore-arm on the stock. A small medicine-bag of beaver-skin hung on his right side, and on the strap passing over his right shoulder a number of strips of shaggy buffalo-hide were fastened as a rest for the rifle. The young rider's dress consisted of leathern breeches adorned on the sides with a delicate fringe of the same material, and fastened at top by a strap to the short leathern petticoat that was gathered round his hips, and decorated with very long fringe. On his feet he had deer-hide moccasins, round his neck was a collar of very large white beads, very finely cut out of shells, and round his arms was a number of polished brass rings. He sat his horse nobly, and turned his flashing black eyes in all directions.

We soon reached the Delaware camp, hobbled our horses in the grass close by, and went up to the chief, who was lying at his fire, in front of his great buffalo-hide tent, and being served with food by his two young squaws. Without rising, he invited us to sit down by his side, and smoke the pipe of peace with him, while he silently gazed in admiration at Black Tiger. The camp consisted of some forty tents of white buffalo-hides, erected under clumps of trees on the river-bank, and before which an equal number of fires was burning. From the trees around hung a number of skins of every description, stretched out to dry in the sun; while men, women, and children lay round the fire,

and were eating their dinner. A heap of dogs were running about the camp, while some hundred horses and mules were grazing around. We sat down on a buffalo-hide by the chief's fire; and he at once told us about his journey which he had made in spring in the Rocky Mountains: he wished to remain during the winter in the South, and next spring pay a visit to his home on the Kansas. He described in a very animated way the hunts he had made there, and the bloody fights with hostile tribes; gave me a very attractive description of the mountains, rivers, and valleys of those parts; and remarked, with a slightly jealous look, that I occupied the best land. I answered him that this land was free as before to friendly Indians like the Delawares: the latter could sleep the more tranquilly, because I only pursued the foes of my Indian friends, and had cast my bullets solely for them. This speech produced a very good effect upon my red friend; and, with a cordial laugh, he took my hand in his two, and shook it with an expression of the most hearty and sincere friendliness. Soon after, he said a few words to one of his squaws; and one of his little ones, about four years of age, came out of the tent soon after, dragging an enormous tanned, exquisitely painted buffalo-hide, which he presented to me, while his father nodded kindly.

While we were sitting thus coseily together, several of the Indians in the other tents prepared to go hunting, mounted their horses, called their dogs, and rode off; while others got their fishing-tackle ready, or sported with the girls at the fire. Two young squaws went out in front of the camp, followed by several youths, and stood side by side to try their speed in running. I looked for a long time at these graceful little savages, as they teased each other, and bounded about with the most pleasing movements: then I

once more assured the chief of my friendship, and rode back to the fort.

Our horses had enjoyed a rather long rest, when I one morning rode across the river with Tiger to the northern prairies for the purpose of procuring fresh meat. We had been an hour under way when we reached a stream which winds through the prairie to the Leone, and is densely overgrown on both banks with birch-bushes. The stream through its windings forms here almost an island, as it flows past again only a few yards from its own bed. I saw from a distance a remarkably fat buffalo in the young, fresh grass of this island, and on the other side, in the prairie, a herd of about four hundred of these animals. I dismounted behind the birches, and left Tiger with the horses: then I sprang through the stream, and crawled on my stomach through the grass towards the buffalo; Trusty following me exactly in the same way. The buffalo continued to graze, and did not seem to notice me at all. The sun burnt fiercely, although the breeze was very fresh; and I became frightfully hot on this march. The buffalo was one of the largest bulls in the herd, and seemed to have selected this luxuriant spot for itself: it frequently looked across to its friends, and drove away with its huge fat tail and horns the flies, which on this day were most troublesome. Not far from it grew an old mosquito-tree, the only one on this round, rather large meadow; and a very long, strong, but withered branch grew horizontally out of its trunk, about four feet from the ground.

I was near enough to shoot with certainty, but the buffalo was turned from me; and I was obliged to wait till it moved before I could kill it. I lay for a long time motionless, with Trusty behind me, whose head I pressed down to the ground. At last the bull started round, as the flies had

probably given it too fierce a sting, and exposed its whole enormous side to me. I aimed just behind the shoulder-blade, and, as soon as I had fired, laid myself flat on the ground. The buffalo darted round several times, looking for its enemy, but then tottered against the tree, where it leant against the withered branch to keep itself from falling, while it burst into a fearful roar, and rolled its enormous head. I gave Trusty a nod, and with a few leaps he was in front of the buffalo, and pinned it by the nose. I had just reloaded when the bushes parted on the other side of the meadow at a hundred points, the whole herd of buffaloes dashed through, and galloped towards me. They had heard the complaints of their lord and Trusty's furious barking, and hurried up to help their comrade. I stood quite exposed; and expected, that, on seeing me, they would take to flight; but they dashed on straight towards me. The foremost of the herd were only thirty paces from me when I took out my white pocket-handkerchief, and waved it in the air. The ranks now broke, and the terrified animals dashed past me on the right and left; upon which I sent two bullets after them, which certainly went home, but were carried away by the wounded. Tiger, at this moment, came through the bushes with the horses, and said to me laughingly, that, if I had not had the handkerchief, the herd would certainly have run over me. We went up to the shot buffalo, while our horses grazed near us, paunched it, and then put up a number of white rags we had brought for the purpose, and fastened to sticks, and laid a white cloth over it to keep off the carrion crows. Then we mounted our horses for the purpose of riding home, and fetching the meat in the mule-cart.

We were in our saddles when a herd of about four hundred buffaloes appeared on a rise in the prairie, halted in

a long point, and stared at us in amazement. The distance was scarce three hundred yards. Tiger looked at me with a smile, and cried, "Alligator Creek!" while pointing to the herd. I made him a sign to ride on; and we were soon galloping behind the flying buffaloes, which pressed close together, and thundered on ahead of us in a cloud of dust. Tiger's clear hunting-yell urged the terrified monsters to a more rapid flight; and in ten minutes we approached a swampy stream which crossed the prairie obliquely, and which we had christened "Alligator Creek," from the number of those animals in it. The banks were very steep, and above twelve feet high, the water almost dried up, and the deep bed only contained black thick mud.

The dense mass hastened before us towards the banks of the river-bed, and rushed down into the swampy bottom with deafening roars and grunts. Buffalo after buffalo fell into the ravine, till we pulled up on the bank above them, and laughed at their confusion, and the efforts with which they ascended the other bank, all coated with mud. I fancied that at least one-half must break their necks; but not one of them remained in the mud. They forced their way to the other bank atop of each other, and sprang, apparently at least, quite unhurt up it.

We now rode the shortest way to the forest on the Leone, and again crossed the stream on which I had shot the bull, about three miles below the spot where it lay. We passed through the thick bushes out into the prairie; but Trusty did not follow us. He trotted down the stream, stopped every now and then, looked up to me, and gave his deep bark. I looked at him curiously, for I knew that he was on some track, when all at once he disappeared in the bushes, and stopped. I gave Czar, whom the well-known voice had rendered impatient, his head, and soon reached

the bushes among which Trusty was baying, with a revolver in my hand. I turned Czar into a gap between the bushes, when suddenly the shaggy head of a furious buffalo rose above the bank within a yard of me. My startled horse swerved, and cleared the bushes by a tremendous leap, while the monster dashed past me with a roar, and galloped across the prairie. I soon got out of the bush, however, and went after it, while Tiger came to meet me. I was close behind the bull, when Tiger flew past it, and gave it a bullet from his long rifle near the neck. The buffalo followed the piebald with terrible fury, dyeing the prairie with its blood, when I darted past it, and gave it a bullet from my revolver, behind the shoulder-blade, which lamed its left fore-leg. Trusty now attacked it in the flank; and it stood at bay, holding its head close to the ground, with its nose between its fore-feet, and holding one of its short sharp horns against the dog. The buffalo stood motionless, with its tail erect, while Trusty sprang barking before it, waiting for the moment when it should raise its head. But its hour had arrived. I rode within twenty yards, and shot it through the heart: it fell lifeless.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE MOUNTAINS.

It was on a bright, healthy morning in November, that I, accompanied by Tiger and Trusty, left the fort, and rode down the river towards the Rio-Grande Mountains. I had never made any excursions far beyond that river, and, even when hunting, had rarely reached its banks, as it is enclosed on both sides by savage rocky mountains, which neither man nor brute can easily traverse. Tiger had formerly been several times on the other side of the Rio Grande, and told me there was more game, and, more especially, more bears there, while rich valleys ran between the mountains. Hence I resolved to spend some weeks in those regions, and provided myself for this tour with provisions, some buffalo-robes, and a small tent; which articles were carried by Jack, a most excellent mule. The animal followed my horse without being led; and I may say that it could not be kept away from it except by force. We had no trouble with it but to saddle and load it in the morning, and take off its burden again at night. It would certainly stop now and then at a fresh patch of grass, and snatch a few mouthfuls; but then it galloped after us again, and followed at our heels.

We rested at noon at the mountain-springs, which I had not visited for some time; and we were forced to cut an entrance into the little thicket, as it was completely overgrown. They rewarded us on our arrival with some fat turkeys,

which were never absent there, and whose delicate meat we enjoyed, while our horses rested from their hot march over the open prairies. About three, P.M., we started again, and rode in a northern direction towards the foot of the mountains; as Tiger told me, that, higher up, a river ran towards the Rio Grande, with a rather broad valley on either side; and I believed that this stream must be Turkey Creek. We crossed the Leone towards evening at a shallow spot well known to me.

It was a favorite spot of mine, where we took the load off our animals. A cheerful fire soon blazed, and threw its light upon them, while they lay in the young grass around us. The moon had not set when we had finished supper, and fell into a refreshing sleep. The eastern sky was already tinged with red, when I woke, and saw several spits with meat already put before the fire. The horses were grazing round our camp; but I missed Tiger, whose weapons lay on his buffalo-hide. I went a little way round the bushes, and saw him on the open prairie, on his knees, with folded hands and uplifted face, awaiting the appearance of the sun, in order to offer his adoration to it. I heard him speaking softly to himself as it sent its first beams towards us; and he continued his prayer till it had fully risen above the horizon: then he rose, and with a pleasant smile came back to his seat at the fire. He then produced his small mirror and box of vermilion, laid the former on his crossed knees, and painted his face, as he supposed, very grandly: then he arranged his splendid hair with a comb I had given him, rubbed it with bear's grease, and tied it up with strips of red leather.

It was late when we started, and continued our journey in a northern direction. The prairies here grew narrower; the woods closer connected, and the country more uneven.

Although we kept as far as we could from the mountains on our left, we crossed small streams, which either came down from the mountains, and went to form the larger streams with which they flowed through the hills to the Rio Grande, or which had their sources in the eastern plateaus, and pursued the same course.

We had ridden the whole morning, and not fired a shot at game, although we had seen a good deal. Our fresh meat was quite finished; and I was just saying to Tiger that it would soon be time to shoot something, as the dinner-hour was at hand, when I saw turkeys running in a small scrubby patch ahead of us, and made Trusty a sign to follow them. In an instant he put them up; but, as a dense forest rose just before us, they all but one entered its impenetrable foliage. The latter, an old cock, rose straight in the air, and settled on the top of a very tall cypress which grew on the skirt of the forest, and whose roots were washed by a small spring. It waved backwards and forwards on the thin branch, - as if challenging the hunter who would dare to fire at it, while Trusty leapt up at it, and barked loudly. Tiger looked at me laughingly, pointed upwards, and asked, "What do you think?" I gave him a nod to try his luck. He sprang from the piebald, took a long aim, fired, and the cock did not stir, but continued to oscillate, and look down at Trusty. I felt an itch to try my skill. I sprang from my horse, raised my rifle, and with the detonation the haughty bird opened its wings for the last time, fell like a ball, and smote the ground heavily. Tiger laughed, and said that he would have brought it down too, if it had not swung so on the bough.

We could not have chosen a better spot than this for our mid-day rest, as our horses found the best grass, the clearest spring-water flowed close past us, and the virgin forest

offered us its cool shade. We therefore quickly unsaddled, hobbled our horses, and set to work cooking the turkey. We unwillingly left this pleasant spot a few hours later, and were obliged to ride a couple of miles up the forest before we found a buffalo-path wide enough for us to pass through. For about an hour, we rode through the leafy labyrinth, ere we reached the open plain again on the other side. Here Tiger rode up to me again; and, talking and jesting, we kept our horses at a brisk amble, while Jack trotted after us.

Suddenly I heard a "hugh!" from Tiger's lips; and, pointing to the ground before us, he stopped, and said that the buffalo-dung on the path was quite fresh, and the animals must be in the vicinity. He galloped on; and we soon reached a narrow wood, which ran through the prairie in nearly the same direction we were following, and through whose centre ran a small stream. We had scarcely reached this wood, ere Tiger leapt from his horse, pointed to the ground before us, then pointed to his ears, and made a motion with his hands as if breaking a stick. He sprang away with the lightness of an antelope, scarce touching the ground with his toes, and never treading on a branch which might produce a sound: then he suddenly stopped, lowered his head slightly, and listened for some minutes, — after which, he shot ahead again at such a pace that I could hardly keep up with him. He presently lay down on the ground, and made me a sign with his hand that the buffaloes were entering the water just under us, and were going across to the prairie. In a few minutes he leapt up again, signed to me to follow him, and flew down the wood, through the stream, and up the other bank, where we arrived, behind the last bush on the prairie, just as the buffaloes had only gone a few yards along it, and two of them were stand-

ing on the other side of the bush, and staring intently at us.

We both had our rifles raised, and I gave Tiger a nod to fire first. I kept the sight between the eyes of the buffalo, standing on the right ; and, as the flame poured from Tiger's gun, I fired, and ran round the bush to be able to use the other barrel ; but it was unnecessary, for the two gigantic animals were rolling on the ground at the last gasp. Tiger's buffalo was shot through the heart ; and the bullet had smashed the skull of mine. We hurried to our horses, and packed the best bits of our ample booty on faithful Jack's back.

The sun was not very high above the mountains ; but it was too early to spend the night here. Our cattle had rested a little ; and so we merely allowed them to drink, filled our own bottles, and rode merrily on in a northern course. Tiger was remarkably colloquial on this evening ; and the time slipped away, and we scarce noticed that the night had spread its dark wings over the road, which now wound between conical barren hills. I remarked to my comrade that we should have a hard camp, which he denied ; and, moving his hand across a long chain of hills in front of us, he said that we should sleep softly on the other side of it. While saying this he laid his cheek on his hand and closed his eyes.

It was late when we reached this chain of hills. The mountain-side was very steep : although we selected the lowest spot to cross, we were obliged to dismount, and lead our horses. Our foothold grew more and more uncertain on the loose pebbles ; and our horses, too, were obliged to exert themselves in clambering over the many large stones with which the ravine was covered.

While we were clambering on in this way, Trusty sud-

denly growled, trotted a few yards past us with bristling hair, and then barked into the depths behind us. Tiger said a jaguar was following us, and put his rifle under his arm. We at length reached the top, where we let our animals breathe, and looked back for a long time at the valley behind us, but could see nothing of our pursuer, although Trusty continued to growl.

We descended the hill, and in an hour reached the grassy damp bottom, where we remounted, and shortly after pulled up on the bank of a large river whose other side was bordered by a thick wood. Here we unloaded our cattle, and soon sank into the most tranquil sleep; leaving to faithful Trusty the care of our safety. His powerful voice soon awoke us, however, and made us clutch our rifles. We called him back, stirred up our fire; and, as we could see nothing of a foe, we fell asleep again. The faithful dog awoke us again several times; but, when morning broke, he lay rolled up by the fire, and was fetching up the rest he had lost in the night.

We were up at an early hour; and Tiger found in the dewy grass not far from our camp the trail of a very large jaguar, which had prowled round it during the night, and disquieted Trusty. We bathed in the deep, clear river, then breakfasted, and set out again.

We had been marching for three hours, when the country became clearer, the mountains formed into large masses, and the valleys between grew wider. It was twilight; and we had, as I thought, surmounted the last short but steep rise, when Czar suddenly darted back, and a jaguar appeared about thirty yards ahead, gazed at me for a moment, lay down flat on the grass, and drew up its hind legs for a spring. This did not take an instant; and I had pointed my rifle over the neck of my rearing steed at my enemy,

when it made its first leap. At this moment I fired, but heard simultaneously the crack of another rifle behind me. Czar turned round at my shot, and almost leapt on Tiger, who was standing behind me on foot, and then darted down the hill. I shouted to him to stop my horse, and saw the jaguar appear on the top of the steep. I sent my second bullet through its chest; and it rolled down towards me in the most awful fury. I called Trusty to me, and fired a couple of revolver-shots into the gigantic body of my foe, which ere long gave up the ghost with savage convulsions. My first bullet had passed through its left side; but Tiger's had seriously hurt the spine behind the left shoulder. Tiger's shot had certainly gained the victory, as it robbed the brute of its springing power; and it caused him great delight when I acknowledged his victory, and surrendered to him the fine large skin, which I bought of him on the same evening for a number of trifles to be delivered when we returned home.

It was rather dark when I lit a large fire, and we set to work stripping off the fine spotted skin of the royal beast. As it was very uncertain whether we should find water, we unsaddled, hobbled the cattle, and put on the coffee water to boil. We soon had the jaguar's huge skin off, and hung it, stretched on young cedar-branches on a tree close to the fire, to dry. Then we prepared supper, drank coffee, and ere long were asleep near our horses, while Trusty patrolled round camp.

A splendid morning awoke us from our dreams, and displayed to us the wild but beautiful scenery we had noticed on the previous evening. We had camped at the entrance of a plateau, bordered on the east by the cedar-clad hills sloping down to the Rio Grande, while on the west a chain of large mountains ran northward. The plateau was abun-

dantly covered with grass ; but its surface did not display the same monotony as those lying to the east of the Rio Grande : it was covered with patches of wood, and here and there huge masses of rock arose. We marched northward ; and, as the mountains to the west appeared to us too difficult, we soon crossed a splendid small stream where we watered our horses and filled our flasks. For three days we followed its course through this park ; at times over fresh green prairies, at others through thick woods or *cañons*. We met a great many antelopes and deer, but only saw a few buffaloes at a great distance.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WEICOS.

ON the third evening we approached the western mountain-chain which bordered the northern end of the plain we were crossing. Our road slowly rose, while we steered towards a gap in the mountains, where we hoped to find an available path. For an hour, our path was steep, and vegetation had nearly entirely disappeared; only a few reeds were visible in the crevices between the rocks.

All at once Tiger shouted to me to halt, and immediately after I heard him utter "Pah," in his Indian language. It was water he wished to indicate; and he told me he could hear the rustling of a stream. Our path grew rather broader, and ran into the granite masses on our left, while on our right the slope was not so steep, and sank into the ravine between a few large blocks of stone. We had scarce gone one hundred yards when the road before us proved to be blocked by scattered masses of stone, between which stunted oaks and bushes grew, while I found myself in short grass, which Czar greedily attacked. I shouted to Tiger that I could go no farther; and he led his piebald up to my side, who, with the never-failing Jack, also went at the grass. Tiger was of opinion that it was a famous spot, as the water was close at hand below us, and disappeared among the rocks. He soon returned, dragging after him several dry branches, which we broke up, and lit a fire, which soon lit up the immediate neighborhood.

The fire was supplied with large logs, and we then wrapped ourselves in our skins, and slept till daybreak. We blew up our fires, put on our horses' bridles, and led them down the hillside to water, along a path on which we now distinctly noticed fresh buffalo-signs. We then turned back to reach our camp again. Tiger led his piebald in front, but stopped, and said he felt much inclined to climb up the opposite wall of the gorge, as it was full of crevices, in which, doubtless, bears were hybernating. I hence took his horse's bridle, and called Czar to follow me, while Jack completed the party, and Trusty trotted on ahead.

After a fatiguing climb, I again reached our camp, where I hobbled the cattle in the grass, and sat down to the fire to get breakfast ready. I had just finished, and lit a pipe, when the crack of a rifle reached me from the opposite wall; and I supposed that Tiger had shot a bear, when, a few moments later, a second shot was fired, and the frightfully shrill sound of the Indian war-whoop echoed through the gorge. There was no doubt but that Tiger had come into collision with hostile Indians. The yell rolled down the valley; and ere long two shots were fired in rapid succession. I quickly threw our saddles and baggage behind large rocks, and led the piebald some way down the slope, while Czar and Jack followed me: then I fastened the cattle up to trees a little off the path, and sent my hunting-cry across the gorge at the full pitch of my lungs. Tiger at once answered me. I ran down to the pond and up the opposite wall, continually uttering my cry and receiving an answer. Trusty went a little ahead to clear the way; and then I climbed on from rock to rock, until another shot was fired, and I heard Tiger's yell higher up the mountain. I carefully noticed the direction whence the yell came; and,

calling Trusty to me, I ran forward rapidly, though cautiously, between the scattered bowlders.

I was standing before a small grass-covered mound when Trusty growled and sniffed : I went up in a stooping posture, and hardly had reached the top when I saw Tiger with his back turned to me, holding in one hand his rifle, in the other the bleeding scalp of his murdered foe, and gazing at the latter, who lay outstretched in the grass : without turning, he told me that the Weico had almost sent him to his fathers, but his heart trembled, and hence he aimed badly. Tiger had seen his enemy first, and fired soonest, but missed ; and the other had not hit him either as he ran. Tiger pursued him ; and both reloaded while running, till the Weico reached the spot where he now lay, and the Delaware sprang on the grass-plot a little higher up. The Weico fired and missed again ; and Tiger in response sent a bullet through his loins, though without being aware that he had hit him. The Weico disappeared in the grass, and Tiger too, as he fancied the other was reloading ; but when he had performed the same operation himself, and saw nothing of his foe, he crept to an adjacent rock which he mounted, and saw the other in the grass reloading, upon which he sent a bullet through his heart, and speedily scalped him. Tiger now took his conquered foe's gun, medicine-bag, beads, and armlets, and made me a sign to return to the horses, while he sprang from rock to rock with the lightness of a deer.

We saddled, and soon left our camp, as Tiger said there were several Weicos in the neighborhood ; for on the previous evening they had made each other signs with the owl-hoot. Our road ran from here close to the precipice, and for some few hundred yards was very difficult. We were obliged to lead the horses, and make them leap over several

granite blocks, while the grass grew to a man's height between the loose stones; and we could not see where we stepped. Here, however, the road became better, and led us in a pretty valley through which a stream wound, while on both sides granite walls begirt it to a height of at least three hundred feet.

The stream wound out of the forest close by. I had gone to it to fill my bottle, when I noticed a number of bees on the bank, which, however, did not fly into the wood, but into the prairie before us. I called up Tiger, who seated himself by my side; and we accurately observed their course by the compass, and saw that they all flew to an old plane-tree which grew in the grass about a thousand yards from us. We went up to the tree, and found that the bees went to a very large bough, which had an opening at the top. We fetched our weapons and axes, and brought out our cattle under the plane, where I also ordered Trusty to lie down. Then we went up to the tree, whose stem was at least eight feet in diameter, threw a lasso over the lowest branch, clambered up it, and went to the branch containing the bees. It was at least a foot and a half in thickness; and we had to work with our small axes for nearly an hour before it gave way, and fell with a crash to the ground; whereon the startled bees rose like a pillar of smoke, and swarmed off towards the forest. We soon went down the lasso, and began eating the clear honey which flowed out of the broken branch. We ate, and took pieces of the largest combs to our camp, where we laid them in the shade.

We had eaten heartily of it, when we set out about three P.M., and continued our journey down the stream. The sun was sinking behind the mountains on our left, when we again struck the stream which we had left in pursuing a

northern course, and resolved to pass the night here. We had unsaddled, hobbled our horses, and lit a fire, when Tiger took his rifle, and went towards the western hills to see whether he could procure any fresh game, as our stock was entirely exhausted. The sun had set, the time hung heavy at the fire; so I rose, took my rifle, and walked slowly down the stream, while Trusty ran ahead in the scrub. I had hardly gone a hundred yards when I noticed that the stream turned to the west a little lower down; and its banks were covered with rocks. Suddenly there was a crash in the scrub ahead of me; and I heard a loud wail which filled me with terror, for I knew the sound but too well, — it was the wail of a jaguar-cub, which Trusty held in his teeth. I ran up, and saw him shaking one, while another was escaping in the bushes. As I knew exactly what would happen, I looked around, with my cocked rifle in my hand, and saw the mother coming down with terrible bounds from the oak-clumps higher up. There was not a tree near; and I must await it in the open. Trusty placed himself close to my side; and, with every hair bristling, he uttered his most savage bass-notes through his gnashing teeth. The only thing now was to hit, or else Trusty at least was lost, and myself too, very probably. Forty paces from me the infuriated brute crouched, displaying its fangs, and lashing its sides with its long, spotted tail. When I shot, the beast turned over, but then flew towards me with a fresh spring. I shot again; and it rolled on the ground. I went up close to it, and fired a revolver-bullet through its head, whereon it fell lifeless.

After reloading, I went back to camp to wait for Tiger, whom I had also heard firing. It was dark when I heard him coming, and saw his brown, elastic form coming through the bushes. Over his right shoulder hung two

deer-legs ; and the stripped-off meat of the back was thrown across the barrel of his long rifle, which rested on his left shoulder. He threw down his load, lay on his stomach on the river-bank, and quenched his thirst. Then he returned to the fire, and said that I had been shooting too, and intimated by three fingers the number of shots I had fired. I answered him that my deer was lying down the stream, but we would sup first, and then fetch it.

We now attacked the excellent venison, and enjoyed a hearty supper, when I gave Tiger a sign to follow me. I led him to the jaguar ; and he uttered a loud cry when he saw it lying on the grass with the cub by its side. The moon lit us while we stripped off its splendid skin, which was larger than the one we had obtained a few days previously. We then stretched out the large hide, put it in front of the fire, and slept quietly and undisturbed till morning.

On this day we followed the stream, which flowed for about five miles westward, but then suddenly turned round a tall hill to the east, and probably fell into the Rio Grande. Here we left it, however, and rode up a small stream which joined it, and came from the west. We followed the narrow valley through which it ran, and found there a rather broad, though at times stony road. It was bordered on both sides by granite hills, and ran rather steeply up to the heights, where it expanded into a table-land. This plateau lay on the top of the mountains which we had seen to the west when riding up ; and I resolved to follow it in that direction, so as, if possible, to reach the declivity on the other side before night surprised us, as the barrenness of these lofty plateaus recalled unpleasant reminiscences.

Our road down to the plain, though not very steep, was fatiguing and wearisome, as the hillside was here and there cut up by broad *cañons*, which we were compelled to ride

round. As we were going down one of these ravines, one of the beautiful leopard-cats, so frequent in these mountains, sprang out of the loose stones not far from us. I sent Trusty after it down the ravine; and ere long he began barking. We hurried on as quickly as we could; and, on looking down, I saw the beautifully spotted creature crouching on an isolated rock, while Trusty was leaping round it, and barking. It was too far to fire with a certainty of killing; for, though Trusty was quite as strong, he might easily be so injured as to be unfitted for the fatigue of our tour. Hence I dismounted, and crept near the stone on which the leopard-cat lay. I went up high enough to see it, and sent a bullet through its head. The rock was too high for me to climb up it and fetch the beast down, so I was obliged to wait till Trusty arrived. I raised him on to the rock, and he pulled the creature down. Then I returned to our cattle, while Tiger stripped the cat, and brought me the skin.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BEAR-HOLE.

FOR about a week we traversed this extensive plain, first northward, following the base of the hills we had crossed, and then westward, towards the more western ranges. Everywhere we found the richest soil, and water in abundance, as well as game of every description, and many wild horses. We lived like fighting cocks, always had the best buffalo-meat, as many deer as we wanted, and also killed several antelopes. In a narrow patch of wood, Trusty aroused a one-year-old bear from its winter sleep, which it was enjoying under some old fallen trees, and drove it out into the prairie. We followed it; and Trusty pinned it to the spot by a few bites in its breeches. I was just going to fire when Tiger cried to me not to do so, sprang from his horse, and ran towards the bear, laughing and leaping, with his long knife drawn. Trusty leaped, barking, in front of the irritated animal, which showed its teeth savagely, and kept him off with its fore-paws, while Tiger crept behind it, and — worthy of his name — leapt past the bear, digging his knife into its side. The bear made a blow at him, but too late; and Trusty attacked it on the other flank. Tiger soon passed again behind the bear, and buried his knife between its ribs; and thus the two fought till the bear fell breathless, and Tiger stabbed it to the heart. He was not a little proud of his grand exploit, laughed, and said that he had killed an old bear in the same

way once, but had unfortunately lost his good dog. I was obliged to promise him a son of Trusty, to whom he henceforth especially gave his friendship. The bear weighed some hundred pounds, and supplied us with excellent meat, in addition to its skin. We packed a good lot of it on honest Jack, and improved our meal with it that evening at the foot of the Rio-Grande Mountains.

Here the limestone rocks ran down to the plain; and, on the distant heights, we could again notice dark masses of cedar-forests, which had so impeded our progress. In the evening we again reached our stream; and though it was still early, and the grass not particularly good, we unsaddled, and arranged our camp. While I was thus occupied, Tiger took his rifle, and soon disappeared among the rocks, which were scattered about in enormous blocks on our left, while on the right they were several hundred feet high, and displayed numerous rifts, out of which a tree here and there grew. Tiger soon returned, and told me he knew where a very old bear was asleep. We would go and fetch it next morning: it was lying in a rock crevice; and, judging from its track, it must be a sturdy fellow.

Day had scarce broken ere we quickly finished our breakfast, and, in a short time, came to a spot where good grass grew: here we unsaddled, fastened our horses to a tree, and then ascended the hillside, which became steeper the farther we got. Quite at the top, between the highest peaks, Tiger went to an overhanging rock, and stopped before an opening only a few feet wide, which ran downwards. Here he plucked a quantity of long dry grass from between the stones, rolled it rapidly into a long, thick, loose band, and then made me a sign to stand near the hole: he next lit the torch, and crawled on all fours, with his rifle, into the rocks. I could hear only for a few minutes the sound he

produced by crawling farther into the cave, and then there was a silence again. I stood with Trusty for some time without hearing the slightest sound; when suddenly a stifled echo, resembling a powerful gust of wind, came out of the crevice, and directly after, a scratching and rustling were audible, advancing towards the orifice, till, all at once, a heavy black bear appeared with a bleeding face.

I was standing only a few yards from the cave, and, for the sake of Tiger, wished to let it come out entirely ere I fired, as I felt convinced that the brute was wounded; and, by firing prematurely, I might turn it back on my comrade. I pressed close to the rock; and the bear had made some forward bounds, when I sent both bullets through it, although without checking its pace. The bear disappeared behind the nearest rock; and, at the same moment, Tiger came out of the cave all right, and ran off as quickly as a deer after the bear. I followed, and was compelled to use every exertion to keep Tiger in sight, when I noticed, that, in running, he reloaded, and, suddenly sinking on one knee, fired. But he at once sprang up again; and, while reloading, sprang from stone to stone, till he knelt once more and fired. I kept as close as I could behind him, and was running up a rather steep incline, over large masses of stones, when I heard Tiger's rifle crack for the third time. In a few minutes, I got round a large rock table, and saw him carelessly sitting on a stone, and reloading. When I went up to him, he raised his left arm, and pointed to a heap of piled-up rocks, where, to my surprise, I saw the bear peeping over one of them, like a preacher in his pulpit. It had flown there, mortally wounded, to defend itself, and showed us its bleeding terrible range of teeth.

I quickly loaded, and shot it through the head, upon which it rolled down from its elevation. I took out my

pocket-book, and made a sketch of the rocks, while Tiger skinned and broke up the bear. I did not notice the latter retire ; but, when I missed him, I rose and looked about for him. On going a few paces round the rock, I saw him on his knees, among the bushes, praying, while before him smoke curled up from a fire of leaves. I quietly walked nearer, and heard him muttering to himself, while a piece of the bear hung before him on the bush over the smoke. He soon rose, came up to me ; and, when I asked him what he had been about, he laughed cunningly, and answered that this meal of meat out of the bear's chest was for the god of hunting.

We hurried back to our horses, which took us nearly half an hour, although we went for the most part down hill. They whinnied as we approached, and waited impatiently to be noticed. Tiger mounted his piebald, and rode back to the bear to fetch the skin, claws, and some of the meat, and was back in camp by noon. We merely drank coffee, packed our animals, and laid the bear's enormous ragged skin, with the fleshy side upwards, over Jack, who looked terrible in consequence.

We still followed the rocky valley up till about evening, when we reached a capital spot for our cattle, and I had dismounted to pass the night here ; but Tiger pointed to the north, where the sky was slightly overcast, and then up the hill, where brushwood was hanging about the loose stones, and said, " We must go higher up the stream, or else we should sleep in the water." He now showed me that this brushwood had been lodged among the stones by the swollen stream, and we consequently camped higher up. For the first time during this tour, our tent was put up, and our baggage placed under it. Then we dug a deep trench round it, and laid in an ample stock of firewood. We lit the fire

under a large rock, so that it was protected from the north wind, and drove strong pickets into the ground in order to fasten up our cattle close to the tent. We consequently let them graze by the water side till it grew dark, and then led them up to the camp, where we secured them, and on the next morning continued our journey along the woods till, to our great joy, we found a much-trampled buffalo-track, by which we entered them. It led us down between two high hills; and hence I was afraid lest it might be a path, which, made by animals grazing on the hill down to a stream, would terminate there. In half an hour, we reached some large springs which gushed out of a rock, and flowed in a south-eastern direction through a very narrow gorge covered with bushes, dry wood, and over-arching cedars. The path, however, ran hence, to our great joy, eastward; and we dismounted, as the cedar-branches hung too near over the path.

We had almost reached the top, where only a few cedars stood before us. Suddenly I fancied I could hear a tremendous rustling some distance off. I cautiously ascended to the top of the hill, and saw here, about forty yards ahead of me, three enormous condors, one of which was standing on the ground with expanded wings, while the other two were springing round it, and rising each time some feet from the ground. I sank on one knee, and sent a bullet into the broad chest of the first; while the other two fluttered their wings with a frightful yell, and soon rose high in air above me. Just as I was going to fire the second barrel, Tiger's rifle cracked behind me; and the eagle I was aiming at turned over in the air, and fluttered down. I turned round to the third, and fired at it as it was soaring over the depths near us. I saw the bullet enter the soft feathers under the belly; and it shot like a dart with out-

stretched wings between the hills, where it disappeared among the dark cedars.

Tiger had cut off his eagle's head by the time I ran up to mine, and found under it an antelope, which the brave bird had just killed, and which had only lost its eyes and tongue. Its body was but slightly ripped up ; but the whole back was covered with blood, which flowed from countless small holes produced by the eight-inch long claws of these rulers of the air. Tiger was beside himself for delight ; for the wing and tail feathers of these birds are the greatest ornaments an Indian knows, and he will readily give his best horse for them. He wears them on the band which confines his hair ; and the claws, sewn on a strap, form a necklace. I told him I intended to skin mine, and take it home to stuff ; but he was of opinion that he must fetch the feathers of the third condor, which had fallen into the valley ; and he at once disappeared. I did not consider it possible to get down there, and utterly so to find the eagle ; for I had watched it fly at least a mile. I at once set to work skinning my bird, and had not finished when Trusty growled, and Tiger really soon ran up with the spoils of the other bird.

It was noon when we mounted our horses, and rode down the stony incline. We moved along around the hills again, and seemed hardly to leave the spot ; for we frequently rode for half an hour, and then suddenly found ourselves again in front of an old withered tree, or a rock emerging from the cedars which we had seen before. We rode without interruption until the sun hid itself behind the highest peaks, and cast long shadows over the hills glistening in the evening light.

We halted in one of the countless hollows of these stony mountains where rain-water had collected, and decent grass grew on a small open space, took the burdens off our very

wearied horses, and soon lay on our skins near the fire. A very large dry cedar-trunk rose with its upper half out of the coppice. We lit our fire against its side, so that it soon began to smoulder, and gave out a great heat. During the night, we scarce needed to look at it, and in the morning found small flames still playing round the half-burnt tree. Ere long, however, we mounted, in order to bid farewell the sooner to these inhospitable forests, and see once more the frontiers of my home, — the Rio Grande.

We pressed on, uphill and downhill, at one moment riding, at another leading our horses, and frequently impeded by wide torrents and broad ravines. About noon, we had a prospect of a deep, rocky valley, on whose sides no cedars were to be seen, and greeted it as the bed of the long-looked-for river.

We were obliged to go higher up the hills here on account of numerous obstacles, and lost sight of the river for a while; still the sun had a good hour before setting when we entered a broad buffalo-path which led down in a straight line to the river. I soon recognized on this road objects I had seen before, and was now certain that the eastern river was the river of my home.

The sun was setting as we trotted up the Leone in order to reach a camping-place in the hills, where I had rested many a night undisturbed, and to which I knew the road perfectly.

When near our destination, we were riding slowly up the last ascent, when Tiger uttered his familiar expression of surprise, "Hugh!" and, turning round, pointed behind him, to the Rio Grande. I looked back, and saw a column of flame rising on the hills on the opposite side, which rapidly spread southward. The flames covered the whole hill; and the brilliantly illumined smoke-clouds rolled away over

them. The fiery waves poured savagely and uninterruptedly from hill to hill, checked their speed but for a short time in the deep valleys, and then darted with heightened fury up the next hill, devouring every thing that came in their way. The cedar-woods were on fire, and probably our last night's camp-fire was the cause of it. The violent wind had doubtless blown the ashes of the burning trunk into the coppice, and assailed the surrounding cedars; ere long the whole southern horizon was a sea of fire, out of which here and there isolated hills, spared by the flames, rose like black islands. We lay till late at night by our small camp-fire, and watched the terribly beautiful scene, regretting our incautiousness or neglect, which had entailed such fearful destruction. How many thousand animals had found a martyr's death on that night! and how probable it was that Indians resting there had been devoured by the flames! After lying silently for a long time looking across, Tiger uttered the words, "Poor Indians sleep warm!" accompanied by a deep sigh.

It was not till morning that fatigue overpowered us, and we fell back on our saddles. We awoke when the sun was pouring its golden light over the world, and brilliantly illumined the gloomy scene of desolation.

We crossed the Leone about noon, at the same pretty spot as when we began our journey, and soon saw the pleasant mountain-springs on our right. Our cattle also knew that we were going home, and increased their pace. At length we reached the hill where the first view of the fort could be obtained, and joyfully greeted its gray wooden walls. It was still early when we rode up to my settlement from the adjoining valley; and two shots of rejoicing welcomed us from the western turret of the fort, to which we responded by firing our rifles. Every thing was in the old state, the

garrison healthy, and the cattle in excellent condition : the only change that had occurred was, that one of my mares had enriched me with a young Czar, that several calves had been dropped, and some dozen little pigs more were running about the fort.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE COMANCHE CHIEF.

I FELT very comfortable in my pretty house ; and Tiger informed me with great satisfaction that no one had been in his tent during our absence, in accordance with a promise I gave him when we set out. For some days we hardly left the fort, but enjoyed a rest. Tiger tanned the skins we had brought home. I stuffed my condor, at which my young friend was greatly amazed, and firmly declared that I restored the bird to life. After this we rolled cigars, made new clothes, repaired our saddles and bridles, and employed ourselves with the thousand domestic jobs which gather even during a short absence. But, after we had attended to the chief matters, several wants became visible which we could only satisfy on the prairie. Thus, among others, our substitute for sugar, honey, was expended ; and at the supper-table we resolved on going out on this hunt the next morning, if it was fine.

The morning dawned bright and calm ; and both conditions are required for a winter bee-hunt, as, at this season, the bees only work in warm weather, and their course cannot be watched when the wind is blowing hard. We got ready immediately after breakfast, Tiger and I, armed as usual ; but Antonio and one of my colonists provided with heavy, sharp axes and buckets, while Jack carried two empty casks, a copper kettle, large wooden spoons, and a tin funnel. Thus we trotted over the spangled prairie

across to Mustang Creek, crossed it and its thick wood by a broad buffalo-path, and then rode down the prairie to a fork formed by the forest on an affluent of the Mustang, joining that on the latter river.

Here we halted, stuck a long pole, on which a small tin frying-pan was fastened, into the ground, lit dry touchwood in it, and laid on the top a piece of comb in which some honey remained. Not far from this we put up another pole, with a paper smeared with honey upon it. The smoke of the boiling wax and honey serves the bees cruising over the prairie as a guide to the paper; and soon the busy gatherers arrive from all the bee-trees in the neighborhood, load themselves as heavily as they can, and then go straight home in a direct line. The hunter now observes in which direction the greatest number of the insects swarm, because this leads him to expect a richer tree as well as a shorter distance to go. When he has decided on his route, he follows the swarm with his bait as far as he can see it, then puts up the pole again, and waits till they settle, or the honey ones move and then fly home. Thus he follows the industrious insects, till, by their restless activity, they show him the spot where their treasures, collected during many years, are concealed; and he then disturbs the colony with cruel hand, robs it of its laboriously gathered stores, kills thousands of the colonists, and drives the rest away homeless.

We, for our part, behaved no better, except that we had brought sacks in which to carry the shelterless bees home, and give them an abode. A very large swarm went towards the Leone, and another to the affluent on the left. We decided for the former, however; and in less than half an hour found ourselves in front of a gigantic maple that grew on the skirt of the forest, in whose long trunk, between the lowest branches, the orifice of the tree was completely

covered with the insects. We hobbled our horses some distance from the tree ; lit a fire near it ; and two of us set to work with the axes to cut it down. Tiger and I had the first turn ; and, when we were tired, the two others took our place, till we, thus working in turn, made the proud tree fall with its whole weight on the grass, where its splinters flew a long way around.

Each of us seized a firebrand, and ran with buckets, spoons, and knives to the cracked part of the trunk, where the honey was exposed, while the bees circled high above us in the air in a dense swarm. The firebrands were laid on the ground near the honey ; old damp wood was laid on them to increase the smoke ; and we hurriedly cut out the comb, and poured the liquid honey into a bucket, which we emptied into the kettle which was slightly warmed by the fire. Honey runs from the cells with a gentle heat ; and, when it is liquid enough, the latter are pressed between two boards till all the honey runs out, after which it is strained through a coarse sieve into the cask.

By the time we had secured our booty, it was noon ; and we recovered from our fatigue over a cup of coffee and maize-cake : then we went back to the spot we had started from, and followed the swarm to the small affluent, where we found the bees in another old plane close to the prairie. We also robbed this tree : it was even richer than the first, and contained layers of honey probably fifteen years old, the oldest of which were nearly black. When we had finished this job, our two casks were full, and the bucket loaded with quite fresh comb.

Evening had arrived ; and the bees had collected in a dense mass on a branch of the felled tree. We held an open sack under them, shook them in, and then rode back to the first tree, whose colony we also took. We returned

home with our sweet stores, emptied our sacks into two hollow trees, and placed them on a scaffolding near the fort. The honey was conveyed to the storeroom, and the wax melted, and laid by, when cold, in plates. The Indians keep their honey and bear-lard in fresh deer-hides, which they slit as little as possible in skinning. They cut off the neck and legs, sew the openings up very tightly with sinews, fill the skin, and close the last opening in the same way, into which they thrust a reed, and squeeze the honey, as they want it, through the latter. The honey keeps in this way very well, and is easier to carry on horseback than in hand-vessels. We employed the honey in every way sugar is used in the civilized world. We sweetened our coffee and tea with it, employed it in cooking various dishes, in preserving fruit, such as grapes, plums, mulberries, &c. In a word, it fully took the place of that expensive and hardly procurable product of civilization, and could always be obtained in such quantities that we never ran short of it. When hunting in the neighborhood, we very often found bee-trees, which we marked in order to plunder them as we wanted.

One afternoon, when Tiger had ridden off at an early hour in pursuit of game, I took my gun to go after geese down the river, which I heard croaking from the fort. I went out without calling a dog, and ran down to the water. I passed the garden and the ford, where the river winds to the north in the wood, and went into the bushes, in order to approach the geese, which I had seen about a hundred yards farther on. All at once I heard something like the footfall of a horse echo through the forest on the opposite side. I listened, and convinced myself that I was not mistaken. Tiger had gone southward in the morning to Mustang Creek ; and I could not imagine how he was now returning from the north. I lay down among the bushes, so as to

keep an eye on the ford: the noise drew nearer, till a mounted Indian appeared on a path on the opposite side, who stopped there, and looked cautiously around.

After a while, the redskin crossed the ford; ascended the opposite bank; and, taking his long rifle in his right hand, he led his horse into a thick bush about forty paces ahead of me. There he fastened it up, laid his rifle across his left arm, and shook fresh powder into the pan from his horn. What could the Indian intend? and to what tribe did he belong? These questions occurred to me simultaneously with the suspicion that he might probably have hostile designs. My gun was loaded with not very heavy shot; but it carried as far as the Indian's rifle, though it did not kill so certainly. I had, however, some slugs in my hunting-pouch; and, while he was repriming, I, as I lay flat on the ground, pulled out two of the largest bullets that fitted my gun. I thrust them both into the barrels, and then slowly drew the ramrod, pressed two paper wads on the bullets, and returned the ramrod to its place.

During this, the Indian had returned his powder-horn to its place, taken his tomahawk from the saddle and thrust it through his belt, woven several large leafy branches of evergreen, myrtle, and rhododendron under his saddle, so that they concealed the color of his light horse, and then, leaving the path, went in a stooping posture through the wood towards my garden. I cautiously followed him at a distance of about one hundred yards, bending down close to the ground, continually keeping behind the bushes, and disappearing in the grass when he stopped, or made a movement as if to look round. He seemed, however, only to keep his eye on the garden, and bent lower the nearer he got to it. Suddenly he fell into the tall grass between the evergreen-bushes, and disappeared from my sight. Had he

heard me, or seen me fall down? The point now was, which of us should see the other first. The grass in which I lay was not very high; but green bushes hung down to the ground in front of me, too close to be seen through by my foe, but still leaving me sufficient gaps through which to peep; while the bushes round him were scrubby, and the grass alone concealed him. If he had seen me, he would certainly not remain lying, as he would have the worst of it.

I had raised myself sufficiently to survey his place, and after a while noticed the grass waving a little to the left of the spot where I had last seen him. Every thing became still and motionless again; and we lay thus for nearly a quarter of an hour, when I saw the Indian raise his head out of the grass, and look about him: he had not noticed me yet, or else he would not have exposed himself so recklessly to my fire. He rose slowly, and glided towards the garden: he got close to the fence, which was made of ten logs placed in a zigzag over each other, and on the outside were heaped up the branches of the trees from which the wood for the palisades had been cut. I had put this up to prevent the buffaloes and deer from forcing their way into the garden.

The Indian now stepped close to the wall of dry branches, while I lay in the bushes about a hundred yards behind him. He stopped, looked into the garden for a long time, and then round the wood: he then stooped, and crept under the brushwood up to the fence, seated himself cross-legged close to the latter, and laid his rifle across one of the logs. While he was working his way through the branches and brushwood, I crept on all-fours nearer to him, and remained behind an oak about forty yards from him. Just as I reached the tree, I broke a thin, dry branch with my hand; and the

very slight sound scarce reached the savage's ear, ere he started round, and gazed intently in my direction. I did not stir, but held my gun firmly, with the determination that he should not leave the spot alive.

He looked towards me for nearly a quarter of an hour, still trusting to the sharpness of his ears, when suddenly one of my men, who was coming down from the fort with two buckets to fill at the spring, could be heard whistling on the other side of the garden. The Indian started round, thrust his rifle through the fence, pointed at the spring, and knelt down behind its long barrel. At the same instant, I sprang out from behind the oak, raised my gun, and sent the charge of the right-hand barrel between the savage's shoulders: he leapt up, and, while doing so, I gave him the second charge; after which he fell backwards into the brushwood. I shouted to my man, who, in his alarm, was running back to the fort, and rushed to the Indian, who was writhing in his blood, and striking around with hands and feet. My comrade hurried through the garden, and, clambering over the fence, gazed down at the shot man in horror. I explained to him in a few words how accident had preserved his life, as the savage had been lying in wait for him, and had his rifle pointed at him; and I then buried my knife in the heart of the quivering savage. We took his rifle and medicine-bag, fetched his horse after I had reloaded, and took it up to the fort, where we fastened it inside the enclosure.

I impatiently waited for Tiger to obtain an explanation from him, as I feared lest the shot man might be a Delaware. The evening came, and Tiger was not back yet. A thousand suppositions, a thousand suspicions, involuntarily, crossed my mind. Could Tiger be a traitor? could the Delawares have broken their long-tried friendship with the

white men? We drove our cattle in earlier than usual, rode them down to water, laid our weapons ready to hand, and prepared to oppose any possible attack. I went to the eastern turret, and gazed over the wide prairie, when I suddenly noticed far on the horizon a black point that seemed strange to me. I looked through my glass, and, to my great delight, recognized the large white spots of Tiger's piebald.

I now felt lighter at heart, ran down, and waited for him at the gate. At length he rode up to me from the last hollow, loaded with deer and bear meat and the hide of a small bear, leapt from his horse, and heartily shook my hand. I told him what had happened; and he listened most attentively. His eyebrows were contracted, and his usually pleasant eyes flashed savagely. He said nothing but "*Kitchi kattuh!*" made me a sign to enter the fort; and when we reached the dining-room, where the dead man's hunting-bag lay, he cried, "*Kitchi!*" placed two fingers of his right hand before his mouth so that they seemed to be emerging from it, and repeated, "*Kitchi!*" *i.e.*, two tongues. He then led me out of the fort, when he stopped, and said to me that the false *kitchi* had laid watch for him in the garden, and intended to take his life, so that the Delawares might fancy we had killed him, and take their revenge on us. It had indeed gradually grown a custom in the fort, that Tiger, when he was at home, fetched fresh water from the spring before supper; and his supposition appeared to be well founded. Still, the unexpected appearance of one of my men seemed to have turned the *kitchi* from his original purpose, because he was on the point of sending the bullet intended for Tiger through the chest of the latter.

We soon forgot this incident, and went on with our winter avocations as before.

One morning the dogs barked in an unusual manner; and

one of my men ran up to me, and told me that one of my buffalo calves, which I had captured in the last summer, and of which I possessed eight, had leapt into the river because the dogs were tormenting it.

Just as we were taking the saved buffalo up to the fort, the sentry came to me, and announced that five white men were riding down the river ; upon which I went to the turret, and saw that the new arrivals were three white men, a negro, and a mulatto. About half an hour later, the strangers rode up to the fort, and dismounted at the gate ; while the colored men took their horses, and unsaddled them. A fine-looking man of nearly sixty years of age advanced to me, shook my hand, and introduced himself to me as a Mr. Lasar from Alabama, one of his young companions as his son John, and the other as his cousin Henry, of the same name. The old gentleman had something most elegant and attractive about his appearance, which evidenced lengthened intercourse with the higher social circles : over his high bronzed forehead shone his still thick though silvery hair, while long black eyebrows overshadowed his light-blue eyes ; and his fresh complexion seemed to protest against his white hair. Though fully six feet high, he carried himself with the strength of a man of thirty ; and his bright, merry eyes proved that his mind was still youthful. He was an old Spaniard ; had settled, when a young man, in Alabama ; and, though the blue eyes contradicted his origin, it was manifested in all the rest of his countenance. His son John was shorter and lighter built, with black curling hair, and very dark but pleasant eyes, a nice looking youth of seventeen ; and cousin Henry, a young man of twenty odd, of middle height, and narrow between the shoulders, showed by his auburn hair and gray eyes that his blood was mixed.

I conducted the strangers to the parlor, and set before

them a breakfast ; among the dishes being one of duck's breast in jelly. The old gentleman was greatly surprised, and said that he had not expected to find any thing at my house beyond very good game and roasted marrow-bones. When I treated them to French wine and cigars, and they surveyed the ornaments of my room, they expressed the utmost surprise at the amount of comfort they found ; and John said that I had every thing precisely as his father intended to have it when he settled here. The old gentleman now informed me of his intention to come into my neighborhood, and requested my advice and aid. He had a cotton plantation in Alabama ; but the number of his negroes had increased so considerably, that he could not employ them all on his estate, and must hire out the majority at very low wages. Land was too high in price there ; so he preferred taking up Government land here, and submitting to the privations and dangers of a life on the border. He now proposed to inspect the land, then return, and send on John with fifty negroes, so as to get a maize-crop ready, while he would follow in autumn with his family and five hundred slaves. I was very glad to have such neighbors ; so I gladly offered him my services in showing him as much fine land as he wanted close to mine.

My guests rested for a few days, and amused themselves with inspecting my farm and arrangements, and making small hunting-trips in the vicinity, in which old Mr. Lasar eagerly joined. It is true that he shot deer and turkeys with his large fowling-piece loaded with swan-shot, through which many a head escaped him ; and I reproached him for doing so, as I considered this shameful butchery. He allowed his fault, but said that no other weapon was employed in shooting where he came from ; but, when he came out to join me, he would also introduce the rifle.

After my guests had rested sufficiently, I rode with them over to the Mustang River, passed through its woods, and followed its course southward to its junction with the Rio Grande. Here we turned back up the stream, and rode along the forest to our morning track, so that the strangers had ample opportunity for examining the land on both sides of the river. Mr. Lasar was much pleased, and at once decided on this land, as it fully satisfied all his wishes. We reached home at a late hour ; and Lasar was so perfectly contented, that he proposed returning home at once ; but I urged him to look at other land to the north of me, for which tour we made our necessary preparations on the next day. On the third morning, we rode up the Leone to the spot where my border-line crossed it two miles from the fort. From this point to the source of the river lay very fine land too, although the woods were not so extensive as lower down it.

We spent the night at the well-head, and then rode northwards to Turkey Creek, in which tour we found a great deal of land well adapted for ploughing, although the smaller quantity would have rendered it better suited for small settlers. Still the country here aroused Mr. Lasar's admiration ; and he declared, that, before two years had passed, it should be all occupied by friends of his from Alabama. I reminded him of the human skulls and bones, which I had shown him at the sources of the Leone, belonging to settlers murdered by the Indians, who had come from Georgia, and only enjoyed the pleasures of a border-life for a few months. He said, however, that so many families must arrive simultaneously as would hold the Indians within bounds. For his own part, he decided on Mustang River ; and, on reaching the fort again, he rested two more days with me, which we employed in talking over and settling every thing. On

this occasion, I proposed to hire of him twelve negroes whom he could send with his son ; for I wanted to begin cotton planting. He agreed most willingly, as, when he settled, he would require a good many things of me, such as maize, pigs, cows, fowls, tallow, bear's grease, &c. ; and we could deduct their value from the rent. On the third morning, I accompanied my guests some distance, and then rode home with the brightest prospects for the future.

A most unexpected event brightened my hopes for the future even more. A few days after Lasar's departure, a party of seven Comanche Indians came riding up the river, armed with unstrung bows, and no lances. They rode up to the fence ; and one of them shouted, " Captain, good friend ! " and I went out to them, and asked what they wanted. One of them spoke English very well, and appeared to me a Mexican, who had probably been stolen by them in childhood, and had since lived among them. He said that the chief of all the Comanches, Pahajuka (the man in love), had sent them to ask me whether he might come and make friendship with me. He had heard that I was a good friend to other Indians, and wished me to become his friend as well. The message greatly surprised me, as hitherto, when I had come in contact with men of this nation, we had used our weapons. My first feeling was a suspicion that they wished to effect by treachery what they had not been able to do by arms : still I would not entirely repulse them, and said, that if they were speaking to me with one tongue, and desired my friendship, I would readily give it to them ; but, if they were double-tongued, I would become still more their enemy ; and, in that case, they would not be able to sleep peacefully in these parts.

I told them at the same time that I should expect their chief on the next morning : on which their speaker intimated

that their tribe were encamped a long way off, and Pahajuka had sent them down from there; but, when the sun rose for the tenth time, he would be here. I promised to wait for him on the appointed morning; and then the savages rode away, and soon disappeared behind the last hill on the prairie. Whatever might be the results of the impending conference, I was resolved to make every effort to produce, if possible, more pleasant relations between myself and the Comanches, as by far the greater number of Indians who visited our country belonged to this nation; and the incessant hostilities with them became the more annoying to me, in proportion as my cattle and property became augmented.

At length the day arrived on which the chief of the Comanches had appointed his visit; and at about seven, A.M., three of these savages came up to the fort to inform me that their leader was encamped half an hour's distance off in the woods of the Leone, and expected me there. I asked Tiger's advice; and he advised me to ride out, as the Comanches meant honestly. I therefore saddled, and rode (accompanied by Tiger, one of my colonists, and Trusty) out to the Indians, and told them they could ride on, and I would follow. We soon reached the spot where Pahajuka was encamped; and I noticed, to my satisfaction, that only a squaw and a single man were seated at his fire.

I dismounted, left my man with the horses, and walked up to the chief, who now rose, and folded me in his arms twice. Then his squaw came to me, and evidenced her friendship in the same way. Pahajuka was a man of about sixty years of age, of middle height, plump, and possessing a very pleasant, kindly appearance. He was entirely dressed in deer-hide; had very fine beads round his neck; and in his raven-black hair he had fastened a tail of plaited

buffalo-hair five feet in length, on which a dozen round silver plates, four inches in width, were fastened. He wore this tail hanging over his right arm ; and it seemed to me as if this ornament was only worn on solemn occasions, as I never saw it again, though I met this savage frequently. The squaw was a powerful, stout, extremely pleasant matron, who appeared to take a great interest in establishing friendly relations between us. She was very talkative ; and the interpreter could scarce keep pace with her tongue.

After the first explanations why they desired my friendship, the squaw fetched several sorts of dried meat in leathern bags, spread them on a buffalo-hide, and begged me to take the meal of friendship with them. Tiger, too, sat down ; and my other companion was obliged to do the same. It tasted very poor to us, whose tongues were spoiled by the culinary art ; still we did our best, and the same with the pipe, which Pahajuka sent round afterwards. When these forms had been gone through, the old squaw packed up her traps again on her mule, and mounted it, while the chief seated himself on a similar animal, which was of very rare beauty.

We now rode, followed by the Indians, to the fort, where the latter camped outside, while Pahajuka and his squaw sat down in our parlor. I had coffee and pastry served up to them, both of which it seemed they had taken before ; and they disposed of them heartily. Then I gave them both a pipe and tobacco ; and then the conversation began, in which the interpreter's services were greatly called upon. They told me, that, before I came into these parts, the Comanches had always been able to sleep here quietly, and their children and cattle had grown fat ; but, since I had been here, their hearts had always beaten with terror, and they were unable to sleep at their fire at night. They now

wished to make peace with me, and, when they came to me, carry their weapons into my house, and fold their arms, so that their cattle might graze in peace, and their children grow fat.

My guests remained three days with me ; after which I dismissed them with numerous trifling presents, consisting of articles of clothing, colored handkerchiefs, tobacco, a couple of blankets, small hand-glasses, &c. I accompanied them on their first day's journey, slept with them that night, and then took leave with promises of a speedy meeting. Afterwards they visited me regularly several times a year ; and, as they had predicted, all the tribes of their nation came in turn to make peace with me ; and their example was followed by others, such as the Mescaleros, Kioways, Shawnees, &c.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE NEW COLONISTS.

A FEW months had passed since my Alabama friends left me; and I had heard nothing more of them, when, one morning, the watchman told me, with great joy, that a long train of men, draught cattle, and carts, was coming down the river. I soon recognized through my glass young Lasar and his cousin Henry, surrounded by a large number of negroes. The train moved very slowly onwards, and did not stop before the fort for some hours, when I greeted the new-comers most heartily. John had sixty odd strong negroes with him, twelve of whom were intended for me; and brought stores and tools with him on five large wagons, each drawn by six oxen. He had made the journey by steamer, viâ New Orleans, and partly on the Rio Grande. When they landed, he brought the draught cattle, and had reached me without any accident. I kept them a few days with me to let them rest, and then proceeded with them across to Mustang River, where they camped on the ground selected by Mr. Lasar.

They chose for their maize-field a spot in the advance woods where the soil was rich and loose; and the trouble of blazing the trees and ploughing round them was saved. The negroes advanced in their job with almost incredible rapidity; and, in a short time, a field of some hundred acres was cleared, ploughed, and fenced.

My life from this time underwent a change. I had

twelve negroes at my disposal, and must so employ them as not only to get their hire out of them, but also attain the object for which I had hired them ; namely, making a profit.

Summer arrived with a rich harvest, and with it again fresh, uninterrupted toil. My neighbors had also been rewarded for their exertions by an immense maize-crop, and employed the late summer in building larger houses for the reception of Lasar and his family. Strangers came to prospect the land in our neighborhood ; and all went away contented, with an assurance that they would soon settle here.

In autumn, Mr. Lasar arrived with his wife, two daughters, and a younger son, and brought with him about five hundred negroes, a number of fine horses and splendid cattle. Our social circumstances thus advanced a stage. This highly educated and amiable family offered me pleasures which appeared to me quite new and attractive ; and I did not reflect that I had bidden farewell to them some few years back through sheer weariness. The deer-hide dress was now frequently changed for the costume of former days, the razors looked up, an old negress hired who knew how to wash and iron ; and imperceptibly many long-forgotten follies and considerations crept into our simple, natural life. Civilization, however, had set its foot in our paradise once for all ; and nothing was able to oppose its rapid advance.

The winter brought several large planters to Mustang River, above Lasar's estate ; and the land towards the northern rivers was occupied by others, while to the south of us the settlements of the Rio Grande also increased.

The other side of the Rio Grande was less changed ; and game will be protected there for many years to come by the insurmountable mountains that surround the valleys ;

but it required a much greater outlay of time to seek the game there which formerly animated the immediate vicinity of my residence. Tiger was beginning to grow impatient, and often said to me that the game in our vicinity had now got too many eyes and feet, and he would go northwards to the great mountains before spring arrived. For a long time past, I had been desirous of passing through the Rocky Mountains; but never was the yearning greater to throw myself once more into the arms of virgin Nature than at this moment, when civilization drew me back by force into its sphere. In spite of the repeated representations which reason and my material interests urged against such an undertaking, I resolved to start in February for these unknown countries. One of my men was an excellent farmer, and in every way deserving of my entire confidence, so that I could with safety place the management of my settlement in his hands; while one of the other two, of the name of Königstein, insisted on accompanying me; to which I readily assented, as he had given me a thousand proofs of his fidelity and devotedness. With these qualities, so valuable for me, he united a determination and courage which nothing could daunt; and I have often seen him in the most desperate circumstances laughingly defy the danger. John Lasar was enthusiastic when I told him of my intention: he earnestly desired to accompany me, and begged me to procure his father's consent. The enterprise appeared to the old gentleman rather daring, and he made all possible objections; but he at last yielded to our entreaties, and equipped his son with a brace of splendid revolvers, while I supplied him with one of my double-barrelled guns. Königstein was armed with a double rifle, but also carried in a leathern sheath fastened to his saddle a four-barrelled gun, two pistols in his belt, and two in his holsters.

While we were engaged in making our preparations for the great journey, several of Lasar's friends arrived from Alabama; among them being two young men, a Mr. MacDonald and a Mr. Clifton, who came to me with John, and earnestly asked my leave to form the party. I was glad to have them, as their exterior was very pleasing, and our number was still small for a journey in which thousands of dangers and fatigues awaited us. We worked hard at getting ready, in which John's elder sister materially assisted us. New suits of deer-hide were made, two small tents prepared, and a large sheet varnished to make it water-tight, and thus protect our baggage from the rain. Then biscuits were baked; coffee, salt, pepper, and sugar stamped into bladders; a small cask filled with cognac, cartridges made, and our saddlery inspected: in short, there were a thousand matters to attend to; and thus the last days of January found us with all hands full of work for our expedition, while we had appointed February first for the start.

On the last day of January, there was a grand review in front of the fort, where we appeared fully equipped for a start, in order to inspect every thing, and discover any thing that might still be wanting.

Pleased, and full of enthusiasm about our enterprise, we spent the day; and, on saying good-by in the evening, Lasar promised to accompany us with his family, and spend the first night of our camp-life with us. The next morning found us busied at an early hour in arranging our baggage, and dividing it among our cattle.

We had almost completed our preparations when we saw a long train of riders coming from Mustang River over the prairie, led by a gentleman on a powerful dapple-gray, and a lady on a black horse. They were our friends from the Mustang: at their head rode old Mr. Lasar on a fine Vir-

ginian thorough-bred ; and by his side pranced a coal-black stallion, who did honor to his pure Andulasian descent from his muzzle to the tip of his flying tail, and, proud of the load he carried on his back, bowed his strength before the delicate hand which guided him by a dazzlingly white bridle. Julia, Lasar's eldest daughter, was the mistress of this splendid animal. Her tall, graceful form, her brilliant black locks falling under her tall hat, her dark eyes overshadowed by long lashes, and the long white feather which waved in her hat, reminded me of her noble ancestry in the days of Ferdinand and Isabella. Behind them rode John Lasar by his mother's side on a chestnut mare of pure Arab blood ; then came the youngest daughter and the youngest son, MacDonald and Clifton, several neighbors from the Mustang, and lastly loaded pack-horses, with a number of mules. The caravan came over the last height to the fort, and was joyfully welcomed by us. A cup carved out of a buffalo-horn, filled with Sauterne, was handed to the guests on horseback, and then also emptied by us to the toast of a pleasant journey and fortunate return ; and we at once took leave of home for an indefinite period.

The end of our journey, as we had temporarily arranged, was the highest yet known point on the Rocky Mountains, the Bighorn, which is situated in the forty-second degree of latitude, and to which we had a distance of about eight hundred miles to ride. And so we turned our horses away from home towards these unknown regions.

We had chosen Turkey Creek as our halting-place, and rode at a quick pace in order to reach our camping-ground by daylight. At noon we made a short halt at an affluent of the Leone, to give our ladies time to dine, and at the same time allow our horses to graze. During this short

delay, the buffalo-horn, filled with wine, was passed round, and was accompanied by singing and merriment. No one appeared to reflect that the next morning would bring a parting more or less hard for us all; but all yielded to their gay humor without a check. At about one o'clock, we held the ladies' stirrups; helped them on their horses again; and, ere long, the whole party were moving northward. The short rest had done the cattle good; and they hastened in a quick amble across the prairie, which was already beginning to be adorned with its spring beauty.

While riding through a narrow coppice, we suddenly saw before us, at no great distance, a herd of grazing buffaloes, which, for a moment, gazed at us in astonishment, and did not appear to have formed a decision as to whether they should bolt, or stand an attack. A loud hunting-shout ran along our ranks; and I saw on all sides pistols and revolvers being torn from the belts. In vain did I strive to master the enthusiasm of my comrades, and hold them back by the observation that we were heavily loaded, were not hunting, but commencing a long journey, in which we must spare the strength of our horses. Away the cavalry flew after the piebald. I could hardly hold back my impetuous steed by the side of Miss Julia's black, whom the very sharp bit alone prevented from bolting, till the lady uttered a wish to follow the chase, as these were the first buffaloes she had seen. Her younger sister joined her; and thus only Lasar and his wife, the negroes and pack-animals, remained behind.

On flew the noble black stallion, guided by the steady hand of his young mistress, from whose hat the white feather floated, while the ends of the long red scarf tied round her riding-habit fluttered behind her. I held Czar in a little, so as not to excite the black horse too much; while Julia's sister's pony followed us at some distance, and be-

hind it honest, heavily loaded Jack came panting, whom the negroes had been unable to keep in the ranks of the pack-cattle. We were soon close to the flying herd, whose thundering hoofs drowned the sound of my comrades' pistols. We dashed past an enormous buffalo, which had sunk, seriously wounded, with its hind-quarters on the ground, and, standing on its huge fore-legs, was holding its broad shaggy head towards us. Immediately after, we saw another quit the ranks in front of us, and dash after John, who was flying before it on his fast mare. I shouted to Julia to check her horse, in which she succeeded after some efforts; and we now rode up to the wounded buffalo, which, with head down, was preparing for action. We stopped about fifty yards from it; when John, who saw that I had raised my rifle, shouted to me not to fire, as he wished to kill the animal himself. He fired; and the buffalo rolled over in a crashing fall. Our comrades also collected in the distance round one of the animals, which, being wounded, stood at bay, and was soon killed. Then they rode back with shouts of triumph, and stopped with us till Mr. and Mrs. Lasar came up. The ladies were delighted with the savage though splendid scene, and confessed that hunting possessed an attraction which might easily render a man passionately fond of it. We left the negroes behind with a few pack-animals to take the hides and best meat from the killed buffaloes, then ordered them to follow our trail, and rode on to the camping-ground on Turkey Creek, which we reached at sunset.

Lasar's spacious marquee was quickly put up, and the long pennants hoisted over it: in front of this tent a large fire was lit, and buffalo-hides spread round it, on which the ladies reclined. We attended to the horses, carried our baggage to other fires at which we intended to spend the

night, and then gradually collected in front of Lasar's tent, where the coffee was already boiling, and various kettles for supper were standing in the ashes. The negroes, too, soon rode up with heavily loaded cattle; and each of us put some of the meat on a spit in front of the fire, or laid a marrow-bone to roast. The night was magnificent: not a breath of air stirred the dark leaves of the primeval evergreen live-oaks, which spread out their long horizontal branches over our heads. Between them, the moon, in its first quarter, spread its silvery light over us; and the sky was covered with twinkling stars. In the dark distance, we could hear the notes of nocturnal birds of passage (which proved to us, by their northward flight, that the winter there could no longer be very severe), till these notes were lost in the rustling of the adjacent stream, which filled up every pause in our animated conversation.

We sat for a long time round the brightly burning fire, till the ladies retired inside the tent; and we proceeded to our several fires, and wrapped ourselves in our buffalo-robcs. Trusty alone still sat with his nose in the air when my eyes closed; and it was his voice woke me, when one of Lasar's negroes rose. I also leaped up, led Czar — though he felt no particular inclination to rise — into the grass, took my rifle, and went to the river, where I could hear the gobbling of the turkeys. It was still too dark to shoot with certainty, when I got under the lofty pecan-nut trees which stood on its banks. On their highest branches the birds were sitting, and saluting the dawn. I listened to them for a long time ere I raised my rifle, and sent a bullet through one of them. It fell from branch to branch, and startled the others, which flew off noisily; while the hundreds standing on the trees around timidly thrust out their long necks, but would not leave their night-quarters.

The cock had fallen into the river, and was flapping its wings violently in the quiet waters ; so I cut a stick with a hook in order to pull it in. I had scarce secured it, ere a platoon-fire burst forth all round me from my comrades' rifles, whom my shot had aroused from sleep ; and I now ran up to take part in the morning's sport. They produced a terrible slaughter among the poor foolish birds ; and each of them carried at least two to camp. I went down the river a little way, however, to have a bath. When I returned, all were busy, and seeking by occupation to avoid beginning a conversation which must necessarily hinge on the approaching leave-taking. The ladies helped in getting breakfast ready, the young men packed up their traps, the negroes struck the tent and rolled it up, and old Mr. Lasar went from one to the other offering his advice. At length nothing more was left but to eat breakfast, saddle the horses, and say good-by. When all were mounted, we turned our horses towards the river, waving a farewell to our friends as long as we could see them.

We soon passed through the wood on to the prairie, which ran along its north side ; and halted to have a last inspection of our small corps. I, who had been elected captain, now assumed my duties, as from this moment our journey really began. I examined how the goods were divided among the mules (of which animals two others accompanied us, besides Jack, Sam, and Lizzy, whom John Lasar had supplied) ; for it is important on such a journey to take the greatest care that the animals are not galled by the saddles or baggage.

When I had convinced myself that every thing was in order, I called my party's attention to the fact, that strict obedience to my regulations was indispensably necessary for our common safety. Tiger was intrusted with the

guidance, and always rode about a hundred yards ahead; while one of us formed the rear-guard by the mules. I had with Tiger a long consultation as to the route we should follow; and, while I proposed to keep more to the north-west, he insisted on a due north direction. I was of opinion that the lowest passage to the north would be found at the spot where the Rio-Grande Mountains sloped down to the east and joined the San-Saba Mountains; while, on the other hand, Tiger asserted that the mountain-chain could be passed most easily due north, near the sources of the Rio Colorado.

The weather was glorious, and the sun poured down its cheering beams upon us from a clear sky. With jokes and anecdotes, our hearts filled with expectation of the marvels that lay before us, we trotted after the quick-footed piebald, who appeared as pleased as his master to leave the civilization of the pale-faces behind him.

Four fine days we passed over these extensive plains, from whose lap higher and steeper hills gradually rise, until the latter form into a chain, and impart to the landscape the character of mountainous scenery. We were among the spurs of the San-Saba Mountains, which do not run so far south here as they do farther west; and everywhere found water for ourselves, and provender for our cattle. But now the stone-covered hills gradually became higher and the valleys narrower: we frequently crossed large ranges of tableland, on which the mosquito-grass grows scantily; and, as this is the only sort that remains green in winter, we could not let any opportunity slip to feed our cattle when we came across good pasturage. We need not be so anxious about water, as nearly all the valleys between these mountains are supplied with it in winter.

CHAPTER XIX.

A BOLD TOUR.

WE had been going for several days through the mountains with considerable difficulty, when one afternoon we reached a splendid pasturage.

We resolved to remain here till the next day, because both our horses and ourselves required rest. My comrades wished to obtain permission to go out hunting, as Tiger had already done so without asking my leave; for he paid little heed to our laws. John Lasar and Mac, as we called Mac-Donnell for the sake of shortness, went off in different directions. The former followed the spring which joined a stream about a mile from us, whose banks were covered with a dense undergrowth, while Mac went north into the hills. The rest of us remained in camp. Shortly before sunset, Mac returned, told us he had shot a large deer and two turkeys close at hand, put a pack-saddle on Sam, and went with Antonio to fetch the game. He had scarce left ere Tiger came in, and triumphantly informed us that he had killed a big bear in its lair, and we must go and fetch it in the morning; for it was dark when Mac and Antonio returned with the game, and John had not turned up yet, which rendered us rather anxious. Still I had heard him fire several times, so he could not be far off; but I was afraid that an accident had happened to him, as it was now getting on for nine o'clock. We repeatedly fired our guns; and, though

it was so late, Tiger went down the stream and raised his hunting-yell, but received no reply. At night it was impossible to follow his trail, so we lay down to sleep; but at daybreak we swallowed our breakfast and prepared to go in search of John. I took Tiger and Mac with me, and told Antonio to follow us on Jack. Trusty trotted ahead; and we had not gone many hundred yards from camp when John came riding down between the hills. We were very anxious to learn what had caused him to spend the night away; and he now told us that he had got among a herd of peccaries in the wood, and, after shooting one of these animals, was compelled to seek shelter in a tree which they invested. Although he shot several of them, they did not retreat, and hence he was obliged to wait for daybreak. Of course, he had passed the night in the cold, shelterless; and was now very anxious for rest. He rolled himself in his buffalo-robe, while I, with Tiger, Antonio, and Mac, left camp in order to fetch the bear. We took Jack and Lizzy with us to carry ropes and an axe.

We ascended the hills on the east for about half an hour, till Tiger went round a lofty rock, and showed us a small round opening about six feet above the spot where we were standing. Tiger crept into the hole with a lasso to noose the bear's throat. He soon came out again; and we all three tried, but in vain, to drag it out with the rope. We harnessed Jack in front, and Tiger crept in again to the bear to push. Now matters went better, and the black monster soon appeared in the opening, and rolled down the little slope to us. Jack and Lizzy, startled at the sudden apparition, leapt on one side, but were soon pacified; and we began skinning and breaking up the animal. I was anxious to have a look at the interior of its abode, and crawled into the entrance, which was at first very narrow, but then wi-

dened, and at length became two walls leaning together at the top, but about eight feet apart at the bottom. The floor of the cave was covered with cedar-branches, on which the bear reposed. I lighted a wax-taper, and was thus enabled to examine the cave narrowly. Tiger had crept up to the bear with a lighted wisp of grass in his hand, shot it in the left eye, and killed it on the spot.

We packed the best of the meat and fat, as well as the skin, on our mules, and returned to camp, where we arrived at about ten o'clock. We packed up, and were under way again by two, P.M., following Tiger, who led us through the mountain-passes, which here became much steeper. We rode nearly the whole day up hill, and only at intervals came to small table-lands, on which our cattle rested for a while.

After a tiring ride the sun began to decline, and illumined the red bare granite mountains that now rose before us, and which we could still have reached; but as we found grass and water here, and our cattle longed for rest, we halted, and made our camp. We were all hungry and tired, and hence enjoyed the capital bear-meat, and stretched ourselves before the fire in our buffalo-ropes, where we awaited the morning without any disturbance. Refreshed and strengthened, we gazed down from our elevation at the dense clouds which filled the valleys below us, while the dark sky in the east over the mountains continually became redder, until all at once the sun appeared like a burning ball over the distant misty blue range of hills.

We had, for a long time, been enjoying this strange scene, and were on the point of going down to the rocky valley, when a loud yelling and barking was heard on our right, beneath us, which rang through the valley, as if raised by a thousand animals. It rapidly drew nearer; and,

on looking in the direction of the sound, we saw, at the foot of the precipice on which we were standing, a foam-covered old buffalo dash past with a pack of about fifty white wolves at its heels. The old fellow seemed very tired, and with flying mane raised its weary feet in its gallop, spurred on by the yells of its blood-thirsty pursuers. It soon disappeared with its tormentors round the rock, and far into the valley we heard the wild chase; but certainly the hunted brute eventually fell a prey to the furious band. It is only at this season that the white wolves collect in large packs, when they make very daring attacks on the largest animals, and even man; and many a Western hunter has before this fallen their victim.

We rode down into the valley, following a very deeply trodden buffalo-path, which ran between the blocks of granite, some of which were as tall as a house, and at noon reached a small stream in its centre, which ran westward.

Our horses had here excellent grazing-grounds, which are much larger than they had appeared to us from the mountains; and as we did not wish to hasten our journey and reach the north too soon, where the vegetation was still dead, we resolved to rest here for a few days. Still, as the stream might perhaps swell rapidly, we thought it better to pass it, and camp higher up. It was about fifty yards wide, and rather rapid; and the buffalo-path on which we were went down into it at such a pitch, that it was difficult to convey our traps across. Tiger and I, consequently, went up the stream in search of a spot easier of access.

About a mile farther on, we came to a buffalo-path, so deeply trodden in the bank, that it led with a lower pitch to the water, while on the other side the bank was low, and the stream shallow: we therefore hurried back to camp, and marched up the river with our baggage.

For three days we rested our horses here, and amused ourselves with fishing and hunting, for which the valley afforded every opportunity, as all sorts of game swarmed, and the covered ground enabled the hunter to approach it.

On the morning we had appointed for our departure, I was awakened by the yell of a jaguar. I sprang up, and heard it again at no great distance from our camp. Our fire was rather low, and hence it had ventured rather nearer to us; and our cattle had probably aroused its appetite for blood. I made Tiger a sign to go with me, took my rifle, and crawled, with Trusty at my heels, in the direction whence I had heard the jaguar. The grass was very damp, so that we could creep on without making the slightest noise. We stopped and listened. I fancied I had heard the puffing sound I had previously noticed with these animals, and which, I believe, is produced by their blowing out the dew which impedes their organs of scent. I heard it again, and not very far off, when suddenly the sharp, snapping yelp was raised close before us. I hurried up some rocks, and saw the huge creature standing on a small clearing about thirty yards from me. The grass on which it was standing was still rather dark; and only the highest haulms displayed heavy drops of dew, while the breaking dawn was reflected in the brute's smooth, yellow-black, spotted body. I had fallen on one knee on the grass, when the royal brute again raised its half-open throat, and uttered its murderous cry, accompanied by a blast of its hot breath, which rose like a strip of mist in the cold breeze. It stood motionless. I rested my arm, that held the rifle, on my knee; and every thing was so still, that I could distinctly hear my heart beat. I now fired; and, with an awful roar, the brute first rose straight in the air, then turned over, and writhed in the grass. I had shot it near the heart, and in

a few minutes it was quite dead. Tiger was greatly delighted with the splendid skin, which he stripped off the brute with extraordinary skill, and left the huge claws on it.

At about ten o'clock we were ready to start, and rode through a narrow gorge towards the hill ahead of us, which soon brought us to a wide plateau, on which we and our horses were greatly troubled by the sun, as the breeze was very slight. For several days, we proceeded without any great difficulty through the mountains, which constantly surprised us both on the heights and in the valleys with the most beautiful landscapes.

The farther we went from the river, the less steep the mountains' sides became, and the valleys widened again. On the following day, we crossed two other rivers, which were arms of the Colorado, and went down towards the northern spurs of the San-Saba Mountains. The mountain-chains here ran severally over larger surfaces, on which a great many hills rose; but they had nearly all already donned the garb of the prairies. They were covered with a red grass that is rather hard, but does not die in winter, while in the lowlands grew the fine hair-like mosquito-grass. We found here again large troops of wild horses, though we had seen none on the mountains, and enormous quantities of game of all sorts. The prairie more especially was covered with buffaloes as far as we could see. We were constantly supplied with the finest meat, which we shot in passing, without stopping any length of time or tiring our horses.

One afternoon, however, we noticed among a herd of buffaloes two white ones, which excited our cupidity; and we resolved to hunt them. We left Antonio and Königstein behind with the mules, laid aside our superfluous baggage, and slowly approached the buffaloes. They were standing

on a knoll on the prairie, and allowed us to ride rather close up ere they took to flight. We galloped after them, and were soon in their ranks, which gave way as we pressed in, and spread on both sides with such roaring and snorting as deafened the thundering noise of their hoofs. The two white animals, an old bull and a cow, were right in the front. In spite of the choking cloud of dust in which we were involved, we kept them in sight, and at last got up to them. Tiger was some paces ahead, and first up to the buffaloes; but, at the moment when he raised his long rifle to fire, the bull turned on him, and the pistol gave a tremendous start. Tiger lost his balance, and would assuredly have fallen, had he not caught hold of the mane, and sprung from his rearing horse. At the same instant, the buffalo received our bullets, and dashed furiously first after one, then after the other, while being continually wounded afresh, until it at last sank on its knee exhausted, and received the death-shot from Tiger's rifle. I now rode back to those in the rear and brought them to the dead bull, while the others skinned it. The hide was splendid. — very long-haired and shaggy, and snowy-white without spots. A white buffalo is a rarity. The savage Indians regard it with superstitious awe, and make a sacrifice of sumach-leaves ere they attack and kill it. They set an extraordinarily high value on the hide of such an animal, and either use it as a valuable present, or sell it for a large sum. After the bull was killed, I had the greatest difficulty in keeping Tiger from following the herd, which was out of sight, in order to take the hide of the white cow; and it was not till I assured him that the hide of the dead one belonged to him, and that I would purchase it of him, that he remained with us. An hour later the bargain was concluded, and my Indian perfectly contented.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

WE now reached open plains, where only here and there an isolated mosquito-tree or a thickly foliated elm offers a little shade on the boundless glowing surface, and the sky forms the horizon all around. To these single shady trees the deer and antelopes fly in the mid-day heat, and lie down close together, so that you may be always certain to find game under these trees so long as their leaves are standing. At the same season the grass is high also ; and it is easy for the hunter to creep, unseen, within shot, and shoot the fattest deer through the head. Even at the time of our visit, when the leaves had fallen, these animals frequently reposed under the scattered trees, and rose as we passed ; forty or fifty in number gazing anxiously at us. The buffalo, on the other hand, always remains in the sunshine, and seems able to endure the greatest heat, but also the greatest cold, before all other quadrupeds.

One afternoon I was riding with Tiger about a mile ahead of our party, in order to have a better chance of approaching game, when we heard two shots behind us. We looked round, and saw our friends gathered in a knot on a small knoll, and a swarm of about fifty Indians galloping round them. We gave our horses the spurs, and flew back to them, while Tiger raised a hideous yell, in which I supported him to the best of my strength. Our friends now fired a general salvo at the assailants, which knocked over

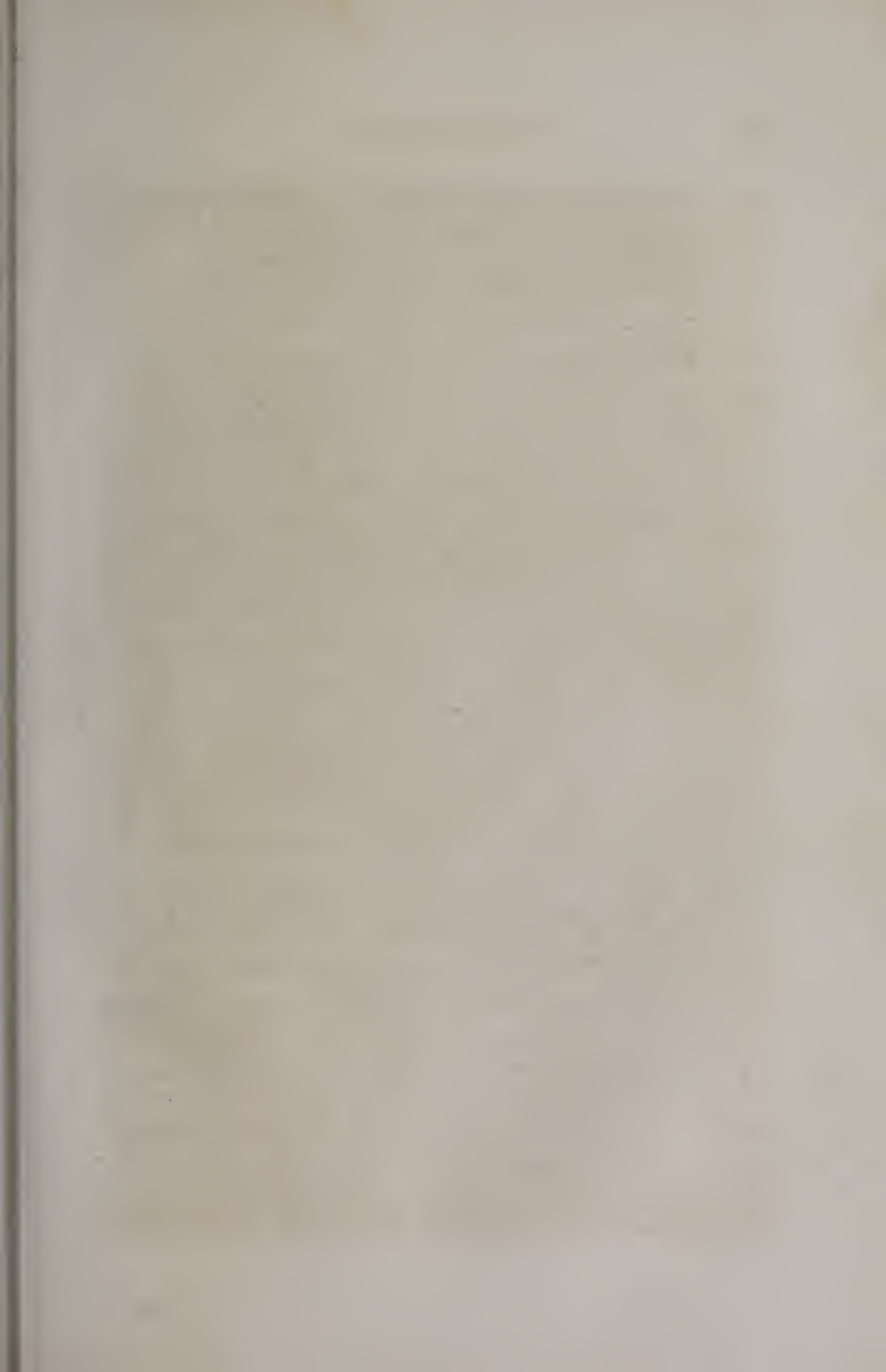
two horses ; but their riders were immediately picked up by their comrades. On seeing us, the savages took to flight with grewsome yells. We rode up to our companions, who had placed all the animals in the centre to protect them. Königstein had luckily seen some horses' heads over the crest of the next hill which aroused his suspicions, and had employed the time in assuming a posture of defence, or else we should probably have lost our mules. Tiger saw, from the saddles of the shot horses, that they belonged to the Mescaleros, who are considered the most savage tribe in the West, and would certainly not have given up their attack so soon, had they not recognized Tiger's war-whoop as that of the Delawares. The number of Mescaleros is not large ; and they are constantly at war with many other tribes, so that they do not care to make fresh enemies among their red brothers. This little danger, which we escaped without loss, was not displeasing to me, as our precautions, which had nearly been forgotten, were aroused once more by it.

For about a week, we marched through a very pleasant country, and arrived at a rather large river, which Tiger stated to be the Brazos, and which falls into the gulf to the eastward of the Colorado. I had seen it before at San Felipe, but would not have recognized it ; for there it moves sluggishly through a thick-wooded bed of heavy clay, and has a dirty red color, while here it rolls merrily over rocks, and its crystal surface is covered with a snow-white foam. From this point we proceeded to the north-west, as Tiger noticed that we had gone a little too far east, and would have much greater difficulty in crossing the rivers than farther west, where, though the country is mountainous, the streams nearer their sources are smaller and more frequent.

On a warm day, we had been riding without a halt over desolate, stony hills, and were quite exhausted. When our

tired and thirsty horses clambered up a barren height, we suddenly looked down into a lovely valley covered with fresh verdure, through which a broad stream wound. The view soon enlivened horse and rider; and we merrily hurried down to the bank of the stream. We had hardly reached it, and ridden our horses in to let them quench their thirst, when a long train of Indians appeared on the opposite height bordering the valley, and came straight towards us. Tiger looked at them for a moment, and told us to wait here while he rode across to see who they were. We dismounted, led our horses together, and got our weapons in readiness. Tiger galloped through the valley to the hill-side down which the Indians were coming, and checked his piebald at its foot. We saw him making signs from a distance to the approaching horsemen, which were answered in the same way; and, ere long, the whole party pulled up around him. They held a long consultation, and then rode towards us, with Tiger at their head. They were Kickapoos out on a hunting-expedition, and had recently left their villages on the Platte, where they have settlements like the Delawares, and their squaws and old men grow crops and breed cattle.

I had a long conversation with the chief, in which Tiger played the interpreter; told him the purpose of our journey, invited him to visit me on the Leone next winter, and asked him how far it was to the next water. He assured me that we should come to good water and grass before the sun sank behind the mountains; and so we parted, very glad to get away from the fellows whose appearance was any thing but satisfactory. The party consisted of about eighty men, twenty squaws, and a number of small children. They had already unpacked their horses and prepared their camp to halt here, as we rode away from them over the hills, and Tiger came





OCELOTS HUNTING IN COUPLES. Page 181.

up to me, saying, "Kickapoo no good ; two tongues." I had heard before that these Indians were false, spiteful, and hostile to white men ; and only the advantage they derive from being on friendly terms with the United States induces them not to appear publicly as their enemies.

We quickly advanced, and reached at a rather early hour a valley in which we found grass and water, and chose our camp at a spot where the stream ran close under a precipice, while on this side was a small copse in which we could fasten our cattle at night. It was an almost circular kettle enclosed by steep limestone walls, which had an opening only on one side, through which the bright stream flowed. About midnight Trusty aroused us by his loud savage bark : he was at the opening of the valley, and would not lie down again ; but we could not discover his motive, as it was quite dark. Tiger fancied, however, that the Kickapoos were trying to steal some of our horses. When day broke and cast its first faint light over the gray walls of the valley, I awoke, and saw at the entrance a herd of deer apparently browsing down the stream. As it was still rather dark, I hoped to be able to approach them behind the few leafless bushes that grew on the bank, as crawling through the dewy grass was too fatiguing a job to be rewarded by a deer, especially as we still had a supply of game.

I crept down the stream, and had got within shot, when I made a forward leap in order to reach a rather thick bush, from which I could fire more conveniently. At the same instant, the deer started apart in terror ; and I saw that an ocelot had leaped on the back of one of them, which laid back its broad antlers, and galloped down the stream, while a second cat followed it with long high bounds. Two of the terrified deer darted past me ; but I did not fire, as I felt an interest in watching the hunt of the two beasts of

prey, which I followed as quickly as I could out of the valley. The deer ran about a mile down the stream, then reared and fell over backwards; when the second cat also sprang on it, and hung on its neck.

The deer collected its last strength, and tried to rise on its hind-legs, but sank exhausted, and sent its plaintive cries echoing through the mountains. I crept, unseen by the beasts of prey, within thirty yards of the scene of battle, and shot the first, while I missed the second, as it bolted, but sent Trusty after it, and soon heard him at bay lower down the stream. I soon reloaded, and hurried after Trusty, who was barking round a small oak in which the ocelot had sought shelter. I shot it down and dragged it up to the other, which was lying by the dead deer. All were up in our camp, as they had heard my shots; and John and Königstein hurried towards me to see what I had killed. My clothes were as wet as if I had been in the river; and I turned myself before our fire, while the others went out with Jack to bring in the game. Higher north I did not come across these small leopards, while farther south they are very frequent.

For several days longer, our road ran through mountains which were bordered by savage precipices, and crossed by grassy valleys; then we rode for some days across open, boundless prairies, and again reached low ranges of hills, between which we crossed the southern arm of Red River, which divides Texas from Arkansas, and falls into the Mississippi in Arkansas after flowing a distance of nearly a thousand miles.

The Rocky Mountains now rose in the west, and glistened with their snowy peaks, while around us the plants announced spring by their bursting buds. We drew nearer to them, although in this way our route became far more fa-

tiguing than farther eastward, where the wide prairies extend to the north. But Tiger employed this precaution in order to get out of the way of the great Indian hordes pursuing the buffalo, who do not find in these mountains sufficient food for their troops of horses and mules, and cannot hunt the buffaloes there so well as on the prairie.

We had been winding for some days through wildly romantic mountain-gorges; and our eyes were involuntarily fixed on the distant reddish mountains which rose in the north towards the transparent sky.

I was riding with Tiger ahead of our party, when, on turning a rock, we saw a very plump bear leap from the bank through the shallow but foaming stream, and disappear in a coppice opposite. It was too quick to enable us to fire; and, when we reached the spot where we first saw it, we found a large elk lying behind some thick prickly bushes, which was still warm, and hence must have been recently killed. One leg was torn up, but the rest was in good condition; and we halted to await our friends, and put the game on the mules. When I was about to dismount, Tiger remarked that the bear would return to the elk in the evening; and as we should soon be obliged to camp, owing to the growing darkness, we could hunt it.

Our friends came up, and we marched about a mile farther, where we found excellent grass in a gorge on the left of the river. We unsaddled, hobbled our cattle, and prepared supper, although it was rather early. The question then was, who of us should go after the bear; and, as all wished to do so, we agreed that the dice should decide. The lot fell on myself, Clifton, and Königstein; and without delay we took our weapons, and walked down the stream to the spot where the elk lay. We advanced cautiously, as the bear might already be at its quarry; and, as

we noticed nothing of it, we selected our posts; no great distance from the elk. I was at the centre, behind a large rock; Königstein lay on my right, near the stream, in the dry grass behind some bushes; and Clifton was on my left, covered by a fallen dead tree.

We had a good wind; and, if the bear returned, we should have it under our guns, and it would hardly be able to escape. We sat without moving. The sun sank behind the mountains and scarce illumined the heights, while around us the gloom was already gathering: there was not a breath of air; and only the buzzing and chirruping of insects and the rustling of the stream disturbed the silence. Trusty, who had hitherto been lying at my feet, raised his head, looked at the thicket opposite, and then up to me. I shook my finger at him not to growl, which he quite understood, and thrust his head down on the ground. Directly after, I heard a cracking in the thicket, which soon became more distinct. At length the bear burst out of the scrub, and came down a small path to the stream. We had agreed not to fire until it reached the elk on this side. It stopped for a few minutes in the water to drink, then leapt from stone to stone up the bank, and walked slowly towards the elk. The bear had scarce reached the prickly bush ere we fired simultaneously; and it rolled over, but got up again, and leapt into the water. Clifton and Königstein sent two bullets after it, which, however, did not seem to hurt it much, for it dashed ahead to the other bank. Königstein at once leapt, revolver in hand, into the stream after the bear, and was standing between it and me, when he put a bullet into its leg at a short distance. The bear, noticing its pursuer, turned, and went towards him with a hoarse roar, while Königstein, still standing in the water, put a second bullet into its chest. I ran up and fired my rifle-

bullet into the left breast of the furious animal, while Clifton gave it another in the belly from his long pistol. The bear fell into the water but a few yards from Königstein, who, seeing it rise on its fore-paws, shot it through the head with his revolver. Though the water was shallow, it was so rapid that it would have carried the bear away; so we both threw away our weapons, leapt into the stream to Königstein, and dragged the beast to land. Here we let it lie, reloaded, and returned to camp, where our comrades were, greatly pleased at the lucky result of our hunt. We waited till the moon had risen, then took two mules; and I proceeded with Tiger and John to our quarry, in order to fetch its skin and the best meat.

It was late when we got back to camp: still our appetite had been excited again; and, instead of going to sleep, we sat joking round the fire, each with some spitted bear-meat before him. The coffee-pot also went the round; and the steaming pipe accompanied us to our buffalo-hides, on which we lay conversing for some time. Clifton insisted that he ought to be rewarded handsomely by Königstein for saving his life by the pistol-shot; while the latter tried to prove to him that he had aimed too low to hit the bear's heart, and hence, as a punishment, ought to have its paw stuck on his hat. The answers, however, gradually became rarer; and we soon were all fast asleep.

I was awakened by the cold about an hour before daylight, sprang up, poked the fire, which was nearly burnt out, wrapped myself in my buffalo-robe, and fell asleep again soundly, till my comrades shouted to me that the coffee was ready. We soon mounted, crossed the stream without difficulty, and followed a buffalo-path up the hills. Our journey during the last day had been fatiguing for the horses; and, in spite of the long distance we had ridden, we

had advanced but little northwards : so we gladly followed an easterly course, which brought us nearer the great prairies. From here we also noticed that the highest mountain-peaks were a little farther to the west, and consequently off our track.

The sky became overcast ; and in the afternoon it began raining, so that we were obliged to put our buffalo-robcs over us, and at night pitched our small tents to protect us from the heavy, incessant rain. During the night, we were frequently obliged to feed the fire to keep it burning ; and in the morning we saw no sign that the clouds were about to break.

Thus the whole day and the next night passed ; and it was not till ten the next morning that we saw a patch of blue sky. John and Mac went out shooting together, and killed some turkeys and a deer, which they brought into camp on Sam. Tiger went out alone, and returned in the evening with two deer-legs and a beaver, having surprised the latter on land. Our supper-table was hence splendidly covered again ; and we greatly enjoyed the beaver-tail, which is one of the best dishes the West offers.

Our various skins, tents, blankets, &c., were now tolerably dry ; and the next morning we left camp, and travelled northwards, towards the sides of the mountains, and the spurs they shoot out, into the great prairies. Two days later we altered our course again to the west, in order not to leave the mountains, which here enclosed large patches of grass-land.

One evening we reached a stream, which came down from these mountains through a rather wide valley, which Tiger told us was an arm of the Canadian River that falls into the Arkansas. When we reached the river-bank, we found its water very turbid, and so swollen that we could

not ride through, owing to the furious current. Hence we unloaded, though it was still rather early, and found ourselves on a steep bank, where the stream could not hurt us, even if it rose higher. The night passed undisturbed: morning displayed a bright, cloudless sky, and promised us a beautiful day; but the river had not fallen so much as we expected, and we preferred awaiting its fall here to going higher up and seeking a shallower spot.

The sun had scarce risen over the low hills in the east when I took my rifle and went down the river with Trusty to try my luck in hunting, and had scarce gone a hundred yards when I saw some head of game, which were too large for our ordinary deer and too dark-colored, and yet did not resemble elks.

I crept nearer, and convinced myself they were giant deer, which are not uncommon in the Andes. I shot at a very large stag, which had already shed its antlers; and it rushed upon me, but soon turned away, and I gave it the second bullet. It went some hundred yards bleeding profusely, so that I expected every moment to see it fall; then stopped; and I employed the time to reload, and get within eighty yards of it. I was on the point of firing, when it dashed away and got out of sight. I put Trusty on the trail, and followed him, crossing the brook several times up the valley towards our camp, as I fancied. At length I saw the stag standing under an old oak; and I succeeded in getting within shot. I fired, and saw the bullet go home; but, for all that, the deer ran up a hill on the left, and disappeared. My eagerness in following the animal was more and more aroused: I reloaded, and went with Trusty after the bleeding trail, over the hill and down the other side, then through a thicket in the valley, and over another hill to a stream, where I at last found the stag dead. It was a

splendid giant deer, distinguished from our royal harts by its size, blackish-brown coat, and proportionately higher fore-legs. I broke it up, gave Trusty his share ; and it was not till I was ready to start that I thought of my road to camp.

CHAPTER XXI.

LOST IN THE MOUNTAINS.

It was near noon, and I had generally walked fast. I looked around me, and tried to recollect the numerous windings I had made, but soon saw it was impossible to recall them, as I had paid no attention to them during the chase. I now looked at my compass: I knew that the stream on which we were camping ran down the valley from west to east, and that hence I was on its southern side, to the eastward of our camp. I must therefore go due north to reach the stream, and then follow it in order to reach camp.

The first hour passed; but I saw no sign of the river. The second hour, during which I doubled my pace, passed in the same manner. I looked repeatedly at the compass on my rifle-stock and the one I carried in my pocket. My calculation was correct; of that there could be no doubt: but how was it that I had not yet reached the river? I was certain of my matter, and laughed at myself for imagining for a moment that I had lost my way. I marched cheerily on, especially up the hills, as I fancied I should see the looked-for river from each of them, and did not notice that I was exerting myself excessively. A certain anxiety crept over me involuntarily. I hurried on the faster, the deeper the sun got behind the mountains: I ran down the hills and hurried up them, dripping with perspiration, with a strength which only the feeling of impending danger can arouse. My energy and presence of mind still mastered my growing anxiety, as I hoped, felt

almost convinced, that I should soon reach the river which had disappeared in so extraordinary a way, until at last the sun sank behind the highest peaks of the Cordilleras, and the gloom of night spread its mantle over the earth. Exhaustion followed long unnatural exertion so suddenly, that I sank down on the last hill I ascended ; and my strength of mind and body gave way utterly. In a few minutes I fell into a deep sleep, and must have lain there for five hours, as, when I woke, I felt on my watch that it was midnight. I remembered every thing I had hitherto done ; and the last thought which had accompanied me up to my unconsciousness startled me out of it,—the thought that I had lost my way.

When I got up, my faithful Trusty nestled up to me and licked my hands, as if wishing to remind me that he was still with me, and I was not quite deserted. I threw my arm round his strong neck, and pressed him firmly to me ; for at this moment he was an unspeakable comfort, and restored my resolution and strength of will. I had sufficient powder and bullets for my weapons : this was a precaution which I had constantly urged on my comrades since our start,—never to go out with half-filled powder-horn or a few bullets for the sake of convenience.

My box was full of lucifers ; and I had also flint, steel, and punk. I carried bandages and a housewife, as well as a little bottle of old brandy in my knapsack, and a rather large gourd at my side. I sprang up, and went cautiously down hill to reach the valley, in which, on the previous evening, I had looked in vain for the river. The darkness and the rocky sloping route made my walk very difficult ; but still I reached my destination at the end of an hour, and entered a very narrow valley, in which I soon found enough dry wood under the trees to light a fire. Close by

I found a fallen tree, to which I carried the burning logs, in order to produce a longer lasting fire to throw out more heat ; then I piled up a heap of bushes and brushwood, laid myself on it, with my bag under my head, and, after drinking some brandy and water, fell asleep as soundly as if I had been in my bed on the Leone.

The sun was high in the heavens when I awoke. I felt as strong as usual, and lit a fire for breakfast, drank some more water from my gourd, and went northwards in good spirits. I had been walking near an hour, and had crossed several stony hills, when I looked down into a narrow gorge, in which alders and poplars grew, leading to the supposition of water ; and, on going down, I noticed an old animal quietly grazing. I crawled very cautiously nearer to it, for now I seriously needed some meat ; and, on looking up from a deep ditch excavated by the rain, I saw a small deer by the side of the old one, which was staring at me over the bushes. I fired, and saw the deer dart among the bushes, but knew that it bore death in its heart. The old animal dashed close past me ; but I did not fire, as I was certain of securing the deer, and did not care to waste a bullet unnecessarily.

I reloaded, went back to the bloody trail, and found the deer dead, about thirty yards ahead. I broke it up, skinned it, and placed the rump and bits of the liver before the fire which I lit, while Trusty had the kidneys, and then amused himself with the shoulder-blades.

The day passed without my hearing the echo of a shot ; and the sun was rather low when I reached a small stream whose banks were both rather thickly covered with wood. I resolved to spend the night here, as I had wood and water, and was protected from the weather, which had got up rather fiercely since the afternoon.

After breakfast, I hung the two skins on my back, and followed the valley for about three miles ere I crossed the heights to the north. On reaching the saddle of the mountain, the idea occurred to me for the first time, that the lost river must necessarily flow to the north; and I was amazed at myself for not thinking of this sooner. Hence I marched due west, and saw about noon a chain of hills whose direction lay northward, which animated me with fresh hope of finding my comrades again. At the foot of these hills, from which spurs stretched out eastward like ribs, the valleys were thickly wooded, and displayed generally a richer vegetation than the small gulleys in which I had hitherto been marching. With much difficulty and toil I reached the mountain-chain in a few hours, exhausted and starving; but the longing to learn whether I should find at its top a pleasanter change in my prospects did not let me rest. I selected the least steep spot, and climbed up over loose bowlders, which constantly rolled away under me and brought me down. I had only one hand at my service to hold on to the few mimosa-bushes or to pull myself up; for I carried my rifle in the other, and would sooner have injured myself than it.

At last I climbed the last patch, bathed in perspiration and red-hot; and words fail to describe the joyous surprise which befell me on seeing before me the wooded vale and river which I had been seeking so long in vain. In the first joy of my heart, I forgot that it was still very uncertain whether I should find my comrades there, and that my existence might depend on a charge more or less in my possession. I fired my rifle, and listened attentively to its echo as it rolled away along the mountains. I halted for a long time, awaiting an answer, but to no effect. I looked long up the river with my excellent telescope to try and discover

smoke, but also without success. I had been resting for about half an hour, and cooling myself in the fresh breeze, when I seized my rifle, and proceeded down to the valley, which I reached in a much shorter time. I went up it to the foot of the hills, where I had fewer obstacles to contend with than in the wood that covered the river-banks, till the declining sun as well as hunger and fatigue warned me to select my camp.

I had gone a considerable distance when the sun stood over the distant hills, for I had walked on without resting, and had no rocks to scale. I turned off to a spring in the wood, and threw off my skins on the first bushes I came to, as they fatigued me too much, though their weight was not great. My fire was soon lighted at the roots of a stump, a stock of wood collected, my meal made, and supper eaten, which consisted of the remainder of the bear-meat. Before I entered the wood, I had looked up to the hills above me, and reflected whether at nightfall I should light a fire there, which would certainly be seen a long way down the river. I might possibly give my friends a hint of my whereabouts, but equally well betray my halting-place to hostile Indians, who, if any were in the neighborhood, would see something unusual in it. But then, again, it was an easy matter to hide myself from them, and, as I was without a horse, seek a refuge which could easily be defended. I resolved to carry out my design, took my weapons, and went up the hills, whose summit I reached at nightfall. I then collected fallen branches and brushwood round an old stone, piled them up to a great height; and the fire quickly darted up, crackling and roaring. I carried up a great number of logs from the trees lying around, and threw them on the fire, which reminded me of the bonfires we used to light at home when I was a boy. When I

thought the pile of wood large enough to last at least an hour, I left the hill and went to the nearest knoll, where I sat down near some rocks, and lit a pipe, which enjoyment I only allowed myself morning and night, in order to make my tobacco last as long as possible, as the leaves of the sumach, which are a good substitute for tobacco, were not to be had.

I had been sitting there for about half an hour, when Trusty got up, uttered an almost inaudible growl, and gazed at the slope under my feet. I pressed his head to the ground, laying myself on the top of him, and distinctly heard beneath me light human voices and some footsteps, which went under the precipice, to the hill on whose top my fire was burning. What had I better do? Should I call out? They might be my friends; but, if they were strange Indians, I should expose myself to unnecessary danger: if they were my friends, on reaching the fire, they would certainly make themselves known by their voices or by firing. I remained perfectly quiet, and gazed steadfastly at my fire. After a while I saw a dark object moving before it, then another and another; and I was soon able to see clearly, through my telescope, that the men moving round it wore no hats. They were consequently Indians; and I was very glad I had not betrayed myself.

All at once I saw, a long way off to the south-west, a light, which rapidly grew larger, and, in spite of the great distance, so increased that I could distinctly perceive the smoke through my glass. I greeted it with a loudly beating heart as the answer of my friends: for no one in these dangerous regions lights a widely gleaming fire save under such circumstances, and I was now certain I should join them again next day; for they were safe to keep up the fire, so as to show me my course by its smoke. I remained

quietly seated under the rocks, and did not think of sleep, though I was very tired ; for I did not dare return to my camp, as the fire was certainly still burning there, and the Indians would have seized my skins, whose absence I now severely felt. I was beginning to chill ; and, as I could not await daylight on these bare heights, I resolved to march during the night as well as I could. I crept, in a stooping posture, from my seat to the nearest hollow, which ran down from the hills to the valley ; and, on reaching the foot of them, I walked slowly on through the darkness.

I had been walking for about an hour, and had fallen several times, though without hurting myself, when I heard a shot right ahead of me. It was doubtless fired by my friends, who were seeking me in spite of the darkness : my fatigue disappeared, and I walked with greater certainty over the bare, sloping ground. I soon heard another shot, and now could no longer refrain from answering it. I fired, and soon after heard two shots responding to me. It was a terribly tiring walk ; for, though it was bright starlight, I could not distinguish the boulders and small hollows sufficiently to avoid them. I also got several times among prickly scrub and swamps between the hill-sides.

I was just forcing my way out of such a damp spot overgrown with thorns, when the crack of a rifle rang from the hill-side in front of me ; and I at the same time heard Tiger's hunting-yell, though a long way off. I fired again, and was again answered by two shots. I breathed freely, and hurried over the slippery rocks ; and just as I came under a hill-slope I heard Tiger's shrill yell over me. I answered with all my might ; and ere long this faithful friend and the equally worthy Königstein welcomed me. Their joy, their delight, were indescribable. Trusty sprang round us as if mad, in order to display his sympathy ; and I was obliged

to call to him repeatedly, and order him to be quiet, ere he mastered his delight. It was a strange meeting among these wild mountains, whose dark forms we could now distinguish against the starlit sky, while the deepest night lay around us. Tiger proposed to light a fire ; but, when I told him that Indians had passed me and gone to the fire, he said it was better for us to keep moving. I was too tired, however, and must rest first ; so we lay down under some large rocks where the wind did not reach us. I took Trusty in my arms, and pressed him to me to keep him warm.

In order not to fall asleep, I now told my comrades how I had fared, and heard that Tiger had explained my disappearance to my friends precisely in this way. At length the first gleam of coming day showed itself, and was saluted in the valley by the voices of numerous turkeys. We leapt up, went down to the wood, where these early birds were standing on the trees, and brought two of them down. A fire blazed ; and the breasts of the turkeys twirled before it while we warmed ourselves at it. Königstein had a tin pot and coffee with him, which improved our meal ; and, when the sun was beginning to shine warmly, we started for the camp, from which we were about five miles distant, and where news of me was anxiously awaited.

The joy at meeting again was great. From a distance we were welcomed with shots : all ran to meet us, and each wanted to be the first to shake my hand and express his joy at my rescue, as they all, except Tiger, had given me up for lost. Czar raised his head and the fore-foot buckled to it, and neighed in delight at seeing me, while Trusty ran up to him, and leapt on his back. All were in the most cheerful temper ; and a thousand questions and answers flew round our camp-fire.

My friends had gone in search of me on the evening when

I did not return to camp, and Tiger had found the turkey shot by me, and followed my trail to the first stony knoll over which I pursued the wounded stag; but from this point he had been unable to find my track, and returned to camp when darkness set in. The next morning at daybreak he returned to the same spot, and had gone ahead of my trail in a wide curve, in order, if possible, to recognize it in crossing. Towards evening he had really succeeded in finding first Trusty's trail and then mine in the valley where I shot the deer on the first morning, and reached the spot where I made my breakfast off its meat. But from this point every sign disappeared; and any farther search would be useless, as night had set in. Afterwards they lit a large fire on the nearest height, and kept it up all night, though I had not noticed it. On the next morning, Tiger left camp at an early hour with Königstein, and told the others that they would be back in eight days if they did not find me before. They looked for me during the whole day, and had just collected wood on a knoll over the river to light a signal fire, when they saw mine flashing against the dark sky, and hurried towards me.

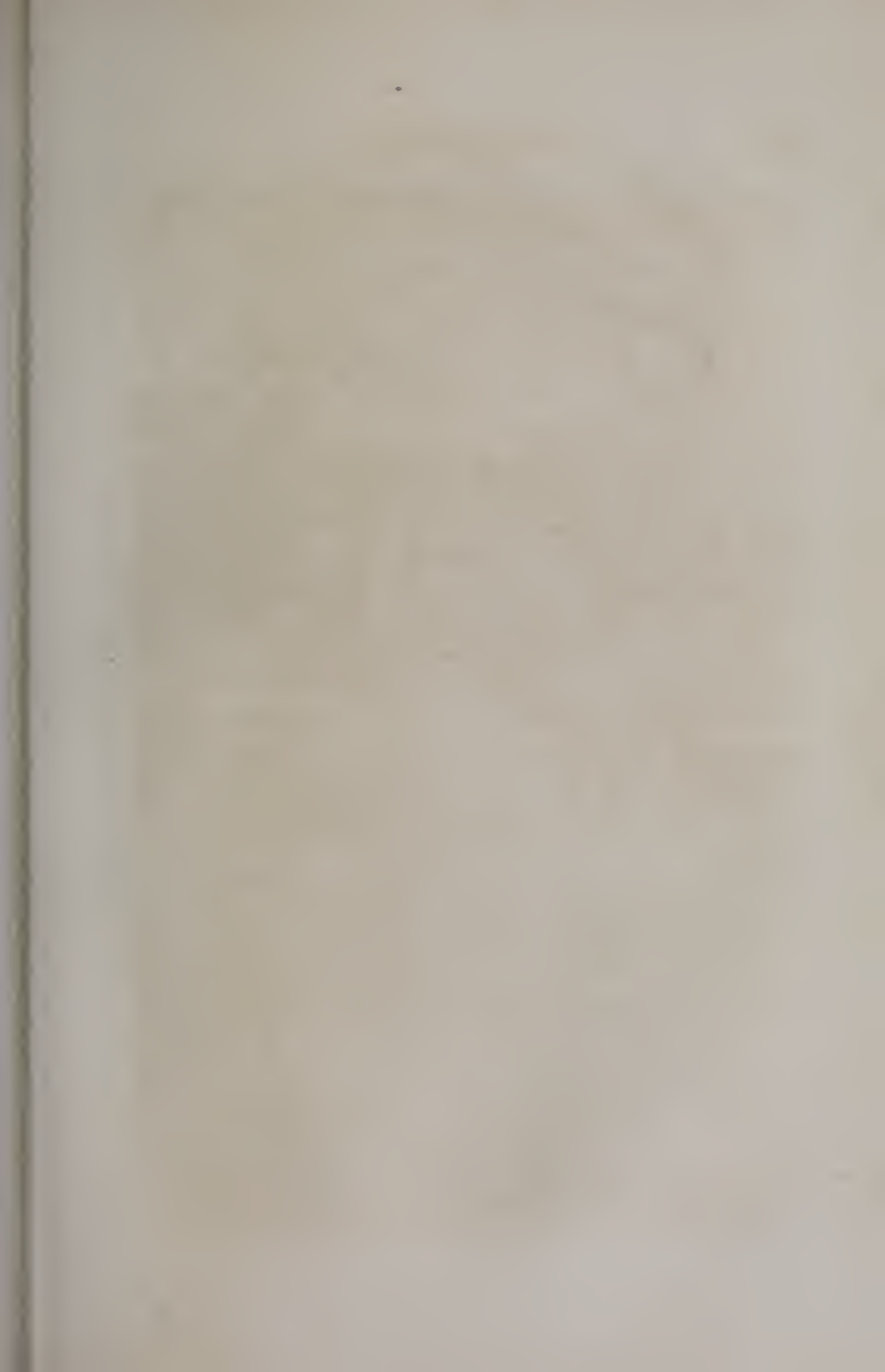
After all the events of the last restless days had been sufficiently discussed, I longed for rest. I made my bed in the shade of a live-oak, covered myself with a buffalo-robe, and, giving my comrades directions not to wake me under any pretext, I slept undisturbed till the sun withdrew its last beams from the valley, and sank behind the glittering peaks of the Andes. I felt strengthened; and, after dipping my head in the river to refresh me, I sat down with my friends and ate a hearty supper, composed of all the dainties of hunters' fare.

The next morning found us mounted at an early hour to

scale the heights on the other side of the river, whence we followed its course in the next valley.

Towards evening we reached a small stream which wound through the mountains to Canadian River, and offered us a very pleasant camping-place through the fine grass on its flat banks, as well as an abundance of dry wood.

We were lying in the twilight round our fire, when we heard, a long way up the valley, the hoot of an owl, and at the same time saw a large, very white bird flying along the dark precipice. We all seized our rifles to bring it down, when it settled on a projecting rock opposite to us. None of us had ever seen a bird like it before. Several of my comrades ran up nearer to it, and fired simultaneously: it swung itself in the air, however, with a loud flapping of wings, and circled round our camp, flying no great distance above me. I had more luck than my friends; for I tumbled it over with a broken wing. It was a snow-white owl of extraordinary size, and with such beautiful plumage that I kept its skin to stuff. I therefore killed it, hung it up, and on the next morning skinned it, and prepared the skin for carriage.





BEAVERS BUILDING A DAM. Page 199.

CHAPTER XXII.

BEAVER-HUNTERS.

WE reached Canadian River, which, however, here trended so to the east, that we took the first opportunity of crossing the hills that bordered it, and pursuing our course towards the north. On the other side of them, which we reached about noon, we came to another small stream, on whose banks we saw a number of peeled trees, and also found here a beaver-lodge. We rode through the stream, and had left it about a mile behind us, when we suddenly heard a shout in our rear, and saw a man, who had stationed himself on an isolated rock, and was making signs to us. Tiger told me he was a beaver-trapper. We rode back to bid this son of the desert good-day, and hear whether we could be of any service to him. When we drew nearer, the tall, dark form disappeared from the rocks; and a man stepped from the thicket on our left, with a long rifle in his hand, and came up to us with the question, "Where from, strangers?"

I rode up to the stranger, and replied, "From the Leone on the Rio Grande," and offered him my hand, which he shook heartily. "Are you a trapper? and where from?" I asked him. "From Missouri: my name, Ben Armstrong, has been known for the last forty years in the Rocky Mountains; and I have now been back for a year from the old State." He invited us to go to his camp and spend the night with him, as he longed to hear something about events in the old

States. We accepted his invitation, and followed him along a narrow path through the bushes and rocks to a spot some hundred yards above the pond, where we dismounted in front of some thick scrub, and passed through it with our host.

Antonio and Königstein went down to the pond with our horses, where there was excellent grass, and watched over them in turn with my other comrades. I saw a track of a horse leading to our host's abode, and asked him whose it was; to which he replied, that on this trip, for the first time in his life, he had taken a partner, a young Kentuckian of the name of Gray, who was at present out hunting on horseback, to get some venison, as they were sick of beaver-meat.

The sun had not set when our friendly host's partner arrived with his horse loaded with deer-meat. He was greatly surprised at finding so large a party, and very pleased to have an opportunity of hearing news from the States, even though it was not of the freshest. He was young and tall, with a healthy, merry face, brown eyes, pleasant mouth, a commencing beard, and long, dark-brown curls hanging over his shoulders. His tight-fitting leathern dress was made with more coquettishness than Armstrong's, and displayed his handsome person; while a broad-brimmed, black beaver-hat, slightly pulled over one ear, imparted to his whole appearance something resolute and determined.

Our cattle were now brought up, and fastened to the withered trees in the open space; then we laid down on our skins round the fire, and enjoyed the beaver-tails, while our hosts paid special attention to our biscuits and coffee, which were a rarity for them. After supper, Armstrong sent the whiskey-cup round again; then pipes were lighted, and we first answered the thousand questions asked us about the state

of affairs at home, and which principally referred to politics. When this subject was exhausted, Armstrong spoke, and told us the principal events of his life since he last bade farewell to civilization. We listened to the stories till a late hour, when fatigue at length closed our eyes.

At the first beam of dawn, we led our cattle into the grass, got breakfast ready, and then went with Armstrong about half a mile down the stream, where he had traps still set. We pulled up three beavers with the bushes floating on the water; and our host remarked, that now there was only one old fellow left, who had escaped his traps several times, and would not go near them again in a hurry. On returning to camp, we packed our animals, and took leave of our kind hosts, to whom, to their great joy, we gave a portion of our stock of coffee. We then described to them accurately the district where we had seen the numerous beaver-lodges, and, wishing them all possible luck, rode again up the mountain's side, where we had heard Armstrong shout.

For several days we followed our course without any particular difficulties, while the country retained much the same character. Eastward the low hills lay at our feet in the extreme distance, between which we could watch the various mountain-torrents for a long way, while here and there the rich green of the fresh turf peeped out between the red masses. Our path frequently wound along the precipices, where it could be seen for a long distance like a white stripe, and it did not seem possible to pass along it; but, when we reached the spot, our horses stepped lightly over it, and we found that it looked worse than it really was.

Thus, towards evening, when the sun was sinking behind the mountains, we saw our path suddenly disappear behind an abrupt precipice, and expected a dangerous bit. When we arrived there, we considered it really better to dismount,

and lead our horses. The path constantly grew narrower under the precipice, and the abyss beneath us steeper and deeper at every step. We advanced, as it was no longer possible to turn back, and with each foot our situation became more serious. We wound round the face of the rock, and looked down into a dizzy ravine, whose bottom was already hidden by the gloom. The path was only a few feet wide, and, at many places, washed away by the rain. Tiger, with his piebald, was ahead of me, and was leading his horse by a long bridle: all at once he cried to me, "Take care!" and I saw his horse step down, and then spring up again. The rain had excavated the path here to some depth, and by its side the rocks went down sheer. Without hesitation, I seized the end of the bridle, quickly crossed the dangerous spot, and Czar did the same gallantly. Königstein followed me, and then one after the other till the mules at length came up. Jack was ahead: he went cautiously up and down, and I saw the basket on his left side graze the precipice: still he got across safely. Lizzie followed at his heels; but Sam swerved when he arrived at the spot, made a leap to get across, struck his basket against the precipice, and was hurled out into the abyss, down which he fell, with all four feet in the air. A general "Ah!" was the sole sound that passed our lips; for we were not yet out of danger ourselves. Ere long, however, the path grew broader, and ran over a grassy plateau, whence we could look back at the dangerous point and into the dark abyss.

The loss of Sam was serious to us; for he carried our coffee, spirits, several buffalo-robcs, and articles of clothing. A little coffee was still packed on Jack, as we had opened a fresh bladder that very morning, and that animal carried all the articles for daily consumption. We unpacked, as the

sun had set, and we did not know what roads we might still find. We had grass for our hungry cattle, and water for ourselves we carried with us. The night was very cold, and we missed a good wood-fire terribly. We rolled ourselves tighter in our blankets and skins, but could not keep warm; and were glad when daylight came, and we could make our blood circulate by moving about.

It was very early when we rode off with our buffalo-ropes over our shoulders: we pulled the large woollen blankets, that hung over the saddle, across our lap, so as to keep our knees warm; and, throwing the bridle on the horse's neck, we put our hands in our jacket-pockets. Our path continually ran upwards, and went up and down from one mountain saddle to another. We saw several bears climbing up the rocks, for in these remote regions they are not very particular as to the mode of going home; and came across a herd of antelopes, some of which we shot. About noon we reached a hollow between two ranges of hills, where we found fresh grass, and a stream whose banks were covered with low bushes.

We noticed, about a mile to our left, at the spot where the stream ran out of a precipitous and very narrow gorge, eight buffaloes quietly grazing, and resolved to hunt them. We left our cattle under Antonio's charge, and crept towards the animals. Here my comrades hid themselves in a dry bush overgrown with raspberry-creepers, that stood nearly at the centre of the opening; and Tiger and I crept up to the buffaloes, which were standing at the highest point of the ravine: we reached some bushes not more than ten yards from the animals without their perceiving us, and lay down on the ground in the midst of them. We had each selected a buffalo, when they stared into our bush with tails erect, as they had probably scented us. We fired to-

gether ; and at the same moment there was a trampling over us, as if a cavalry regiment were charging. I jumped up, and fired again at the flying monsters, which now had to run the gantlet of my comrades' guns. One dropped close to them, and the second fell a little farther on, while the rest galloped down the stream. Tiger sprang up too, and cut off a buffalo near our bush, which, he said, was the one I had shot : his had fled with the others. For my part, I had not seen it ; for the powder-smoke still hung over my rifle, when the brutes charged over us, and we might consider ourselves fortunate that they had not trampled us with their huge feet. We skinned one of them, in order to use the skin as a substitute for the one we had lost, although an untanned buffalo-hide is a very clumsy thing to carry on pack-animals.

We laid in a stock of the best meat, took all the marrow-bones and tongues, and then followed a very decent path, which here left the main road, and went down the stream eastward.

For two days we followed our path, and crossed various streams which flowed more to the south, till the low hills became more scattered, and the glens between them wider. The vegetation was springing up here ; and the good pasturage induced us to grant our cattle some rest, as they had been on short commons lately. We selected a very pretty camping-place, where a small stream ran under a precipice, and was covered on one side with scrub and a few leafy trees, while on the north and east a rich prairie opened out, and to the west the forest became thicker.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GRISLY BEARS.

THE next morning we followed the river for some hours, and then entered a path which ran northward through a lateral valley. We had done a good day's march, and were busy preparing supper in a small wood at a spring, when Trusty began barking, and we heard the sound of horses. We all ran to our horses, and brought them together, while we got our weapons in readiness; when Tiger leapt out of the bushes, and shouted some words we did not understand, to which no answer was given, though the sound of the horses' hoofs ceased. Tiger hurried back; shouted to us to fasten up our horses in the thicket, which was effected in a moment; and then post ourselves round it, behind the trees, as he believed that they were hostile Indians. All at once a single voice was heard not far from us, whose language was equally incomprehensible to us, but which Tiger at once replied to; and, springing up behind his tree, he uttered his hunting yell. He ran in the direction where we had heard the voice, and shouted to me they were friends, — Delawares. Our joy was great; for our position would not have been a favorable one if we had been attacked here by a superior force: it was dark, and our thicket was commanded by thick scrub; so that our cattle, at any rate, would have been exposed to bullets or arrows from a close distance. Tiger now came up to our fire with an Indian, whom we soon joined; and he introduced to us his friend, the chief of a Delaware tribe, whom he called Young Bear. Several of

his men soon joined us, most of whom spoke English, and all were very friendly to us. They seemed all to have known, for a long time, that Tiger was living with us. Every one questioned him, and appeared satisfied with his answers. The chief remained at our fire, while his people went to camp close at hand. He stopped to supper, and then returned to his camp.

The next morning we visited the Delawares, and were pleased at the cordiality with which they welcomed us. There were about forty warriors, about half as many squaws, and a heap of children. They had at least a hundred horses and mules with them, some of which were remarkably handsome. Clifton requested me to ask Young Bear whether he could supply him with a good horse, as his people appeared to have more than they required. The chief spoke to them on the subject; and, ere long, several came up with horses, which I advised Clifton, however, to decline, as they were not good; for I was aware they would produce their worst horses first. After we had inspected and declined a number of horses, a young Indian came up with a black horse which was really handsome. It was a powerful, finely-proportioned animal, and showed in all points its noble breed. The price he asked was two hundred dollars; upon which I offered him thirty; and, after a long chaffering, we agreed on fifty, which Clifton paid. He was delighted with his purchase, and had long reason to be satisfied; for the horse turned out most useful and excellent in every respect.

We breakfasted, Young Bear sharing the meal with us, and were busily preparing for a start, when the chief came to me and said that one of his men was inclined to go with us, and it would be better for us to have him with us: he had often been on the Rocky Mountains, and was acquainted

with the tribes living there, while Tiger was only a young man. I was much pleased at the offer, which seemed to me to be made chiefly on Tiger's account. I told the chief I should be very glad, and we would pay the man for his services: he had better ask him what he expected. The Indian, a powerful man, between thirty and forty years of age, now came forward; and we agreed that we should pay him five dollars for every month he spent with us till we returned home. He was very pleased, fetched his horse, and joined our party. We stopped at the camp of our friends, bade them a hearty farewell, and marched northward, animated by fresh courage.

Our new comrade, whose name was White Owl, was a very quiet, good-tempered, and sensible man, who, in a short time, gained the good will of all.

In a few days we reached open prairies: the mountains to the west seemed here much farther off, and resembled blue clouds. We marched for eight days due north, during which time we crossed many rivers flowing to the east, and came across hunting-Indian tribes repeatedly.

We proceeded west-north-west, in order to enter the real Rocky Mountains, and see the Spanish peaks, the highest in this range, which lie to the south of the Arkansas, from which river we were now no great distance. During these days we generally ascended and crossed a number of small streams that flowed from these mountains to the Arkansas, and always found good provender for our cattle on their banks. We reached a mountain-saddle, and, on its plateau, a rather frequented path, which appeared to have been originally made by buffaloes, though we noticed old horse-tracks upon it. The path became very fatiguing for our cattle, as it was covered with flinty bowlders, some of which had very sharp edges, and injured the hoofs. At the same time, we found

but little food for them on this bleak elevation ; and noticed with sorrow that they were losing both flesh and strength.

We had been following this path for four days, when we were compelled to lead our horses, and expose our own feet to the sharp pebbles ; for all were more or less lame, and unable to carry us any farther. We marched from sunrise to dusk, without meeting with grass or a drop of water. The sun had set ; and night would long before have put an end to our journey, had not the moon lighted us. Tiger, who had gone on ahead, awaited us on a knoll with the cheering news that there was excellent pasturage here for our cattle, and water probably no great distance off. A crackling fire of brushwood soon illumined the surrounding scenery, as we found plenty of wood to keep it up. Late at night we lay around it, and watched our cattle enjoying the sweet grass ; for we felt a reluctance to fetch them in and tie them up. At last, however, weariness compelled us to place them in our vicinity, under Trusty's charge, so that we might rest after our exertions.

Morning showed us that we had camped in a small glen, which, being watered by numerous springs, displayed a rich vegetation for its elevated situation. We were very pleased to have reached this oasis, and resolved to let our cattle rest here for at least a week, not only to enable them to regain their strength, but also to give vegetation more time to sprout.

We made many hunting excursions, but always on foot, as we wished to grant our cattle perfect rest, and we could get through the mountains better in this way.

Our stock of game was again reduced to the dry flesh of an elk ; when at daybreak I cooked a bit of it for breakfast, and, after eating it, seized my weapons, and left the camp with Trusty to go in search of better game. I followed the

stream some distance, and soon reached the bare slopes which ran down to the Arkansas.

I noticed several elks, as well as a single buffalo ; and had walked about half an hour along the rocky strata, when I reached a group of stones, which attracted my attention by their remarkable and picturesque arrangement. I had walked to the base of this mass of stone, and was examining its strange form, when, on looking back to the river, I noticed three dark forms, which were moving sideways towards me up the steep, and were scarce half a mile from me. At the first glance I recognized in them three grisly bears, rapidly advancing at a sling-trot behind one another. I knew the danger of meeting these savage brutes, and quickly measured the distance back to camp. But I was on foot, and felt as if I had lead boots on, which bound me to the spot. It was hopeless to think of escaping : the animals were following a course, as if they wished to pass above the rocks near which I was standing, when they must cross the recent track of myself and Trusty, which they would indubitably follow at once.

Only one chance of escape is left the man it pursues, and that is a tree ; for this bear cannot climb. But then there was not a tree anywhere around ; and, besides, I could not take Trusty up one with me, and he must be saved. I had no time for reflection, as the peril rapidly approached. I laid my rifle on the first layer of rock, seized Trusty round the body, hoisted him on my shoulders, and helped him on the rock, up which he scrambled : with one bound I was by his side, then aided him up the second and third layers, and laid myself close to him on the uppermost blocks, where I placed my weapons and ammunition ready to hand.

If the bears passed under my fortalice, I would let them go in peace ; for in that case it was probable they would not

find my track : but, if they passed above it, I must throw away no opportunity to render them harmless as soon as possible. I peeped over the rock with my rifle, when the three monsters were scarce fifty yards from me, proceeding to cross my trail above me. An old she-bear slouched carelessly along in front ; close behind her followed a gigantic, very old he-bear ; and a short distance in the rear came a rather smaller male. The old one drew up to the she-bear, and laid his right paw on her leg ; but she was greatly offended by this caress, and dealt my lord such blows with her enormous paws, that the hair flew out of him. He sprang back : she sat up, showing her frightful teeth, and with her side turned to me. I pressed my barrel firmly against the rock, and pointed it at the heart of the she-bear. I fired : she crossed her paws over her face, and sank lifeless in a second. The old bear ran up to her, and laid his paws over her ; but his rival came up, and a fearful struggle began between the two monsters, in which they rolled over and over, and tore out each other's grayish-brown wool in great masses. The old bear had the best of it, however, and sat up, uttering frightful growls at the smaller bear. By this moment I had reloaded, and sent a bullet into the brute, near the heart. With one bound it leapt on its foe, which tried to escape it ; but the old bear held it tight in its fore-claws, and dug its monstrous teeth into the other's back. The other bear defended itself desperately, and soon found that the old brute's strength was giving way : it sprang on it, and buried its tusks in its chest, and, standing over it, tore it up with its two hind-paws.

I was certain of the victory, and was so careless as not to reload my rifle, but fired my second barrel at the younger bear, without concealing myself properly behind the rock. I hit it well ; but it scarce felt my bullet ere it turned its sav-

age head towards me, and galloped towards the rock with an awful roar. In an instant it reached the base of my fortress, and sprang with its fore-legs on the first layer, while it opened its blood-stained throat, and, with smoking breath, uttered the most fearful sounds. At the moment when it raised itself on the rock, I held my revolver as near as I could, and fired between its small, glowing eyes: it fell back, but at once got up again, and tried still more furiously to scale the rock by springing with all four feet at once upon the first stage, and raised its blood-dripping face just under me. I had pulled out my second revolver, and held it cocked in my left hand. I pointed both barrels at the monster's head, and fired them together: it turned over, and rolled motionless on to the ground. I looked at the two others, which still lay quiet side by side, and could scarce believe my eyes as they gazed down on the victory which I had gained over these three terrors of the desert. I quickly reloaded, and looked around carefully from my fort, especially in the direction from whence the brutes had come; for other male bears might easily follow their track. I could see nothing to alarm me, and now sprang down from the rock with Trusty, went cautiously up to the bears, and found them all lifeless. They were three monstrous brutes: the old bear must have weighed at least fifteen hundred pounds, the she-bear one thousand, and the smaller bear eight hundred.

I had had enough sport for to-day, and fled from the battle-field, as I was fearful of the advance of other foes. I went straight to camp, and was saluted by a hurrah, as my early return indicated a successful hunt. I had the two mules got ready, and invited the Indians and John to go with me. They all wanted to know what I had killed; but I merely told them that I had killed a heap of game, as

they would soon see. We made a hurried dinner, and then started with the mules. We soon reached the slope, and rode quickly down to the river, during which I constantly saw my rock fort; but it was too far to notice my quarry. My comrades believed that the game lay on the river, and kept their eyes turned towards the latter; while I led them a little to the west of my rock, to keep them from seeing the bears as long as I could. When we were in a right line with them, I turned aside, and we suddenly caught sight of them. The amazement and surprise of the Indians were very great, and were expressed by the most extraordinary outbreaks. They danced as if stung by a tarantula, swinging their rifles over their heads, round the dead bears, and imitated their roar in a remarkable manner. At one moment they crept close to the ground up to the animals, then ran past them with fierce yells, or leapt over them, swinging their guns with wild shouts of delight. After they had finished this dance of triumph, they sat down on the old bear, sharpened their knives on small stones they took out of their medicine-bag, and wished to cut off its claws. I told them, however, that I wished to keep this skin with the claws on, but the two others were at their disposal; with which they were perfectly satisfied. We skinned the largest bear, and cut out the best meat and the fat, which we intended to take with us. We took the paws and fat of the other two, after the Indians had appropriated the claws. I pulled all the tusks out of the three heads, and we now packed the mules to convey our booty to camp. As we intended to remain a few days here, I asked the Indians if they would dress the large skin for me; to which they readily assented: for this purpose they split the head with an axe, and took out the brains.

We repeatedly change our camping-ground, partly to get

fresh grass for our cattle, partly to have a new stock of dry wood at hand; and thus went farther down the stream. We stopped here nearly a fortnight; by which time our horses were quite restored, my large skin dressed, and we bade good-by to the glen which had given us such a kind reception. We followed the path again which had brought us here; and in a few hours reached the Arkansas, on which we found excellent pasture.

We had ridden up the river for two days, when we reached an arm of it coming from the north, up which we proceeded for a day, and met with no special difficulties. On the fourth morning, however, our bank became very rocky, and we rapidly ascended towards the mountains. We spent several nights without fire or water; and even during the day, the latter, as well as grass, was very scarce. We here crossed the highest point we had yet reached, and the snow peaks did not appear to be very far from us; still we found sufficient grass for our cattle in the gullies between the mountains.

We halted for a day at one of these grassy spots; and I went with Tiger early from camp to procure meat, when a flock of mountain sheep drew us farther into the mountains. We had fired several bullets at them to no effect, and followed them in growing excitement from one rock to another, until, some hours later, we reached a plateau which was shrouded in fog. Our sheep flew over this, and disappeared in the mist. We stood amazed at this phenomenon, whose cause we could not explain; for it was a clear, bright morning, and the hills around shone in the brightest sunshine. We went up to the plain, and found, to our surprise, that the mist covering it came from hot springs, which rose to the surface in immense numbers, the highest with a jet of about three feet.

We had no lack of game, but saw, to our great regret, our supply of salt running out ; for the greater part of it was lost with unlucky Sam. Our clothes, too, were beginning to get defective, especially our linen, as we had lost our changes on the same occasion. Our good spirits did not desert us, however, but enabled us to endure all the fatigues of this mountain tour. We passed two nights on fields of snow, where we could hardly find sufficient firing to prepare our supper.

At length our route descended to lower hills, and we reached at their base a plain, which, as it seemed, was enclosed by even loftier mountains, whose saddles still bore the signs of winter ; while on the streams in this elevated valley, which our Indians called Salade Park, May was flaunting in her spring garb. Although the vegetation that surrounded us here could not be called luxuriant, it did our cattle a deal of good. For a long time past, we saw, for the first time, herds of wandering buffaloes, among which we produced great destruction, as we had long been yearning for their marrow-bones and tongues.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ASCENT OF THE BIGHORN.

IN a week we crossed the valley by short stages, and again reached the loftier mountains. One afternoon we arrived at a stream where we resolved to pass the night, as we did not know whether we should find water farther on. Tiger at once hastened off to look for game; and, as my comrades preferred a rest, I set out to try my luck too. I told Antonio to follow me on Lizzy, that I might not have to carry the game myself; and had got about a mile from camp, when I noticed, from a clump of oaks, a herd of deer on a grassy spot ahead of me, which looked like the ordinary Virginia deer, but were darker colored. I took up a deer-call to draw them toward me, as the spot where I was standing was too barren for me to be able to stalk them. I posted myself near an oak, and Antonio sat on Lizzy, behind me. The herd advanced toward me on hearing my call, and were near enough, when Antonio cried to me, "Here, here!" I fancied he was alluding to the approaching deer, and whispered that I could see them; but he repeated his "Here!" and presently added, "Look to your right!" I turned, and saw an enormous snow-white bear forty yards from me. I tried to fire; but the bear got behind a large oak, and then behind another, and so was a good distance off ere I could despatch a bullet after it, which I heard enter a tree. It escaped me, as I had left Trusty in camp; for his feet were sore from running over

sharp stones lately. The bear heard the call, and hurried up, believing that there was booty for it. It was only a variety of the common black bear. I would gladly have secured its beautiful skin, as it is a rarity; but it was out of my reach: and hence I returned to the deer, which, after my shot, had disappeared in a distant wood. I went after them, and found them grazing again: when I emerged from the bushes, I shot a large deer, and found, to my surprise, that it belonged to a genus I had never seen before.

Our road rapidly ascended from here to the higher mountains, and became daily steeper, and poorer in vegetation: still the path we followed was very fair, so that we rather rapidly surmounted the heights, on whose small plateaus our cattle were able to rest again. We left behind us in a few days many mountain-chains with their narrow valleys, when suddenly the mountains before us became covered with snow, and we were soon in the wintry landscape again. We suffered terribly from the cold, as our clothes were not at all suited for such a temperature; and though we wrapped ourselves in our skins, we could not keep warm.

On the following day, our road ran principally over snow-covered rocks. At last, early one morning, after spending the night at a very poor fire, we ascended a saddle, whence we looked down into a plain, whose end in the blue misty distance was bordered by high mountains, while on the west and east it was begirt by immense ranges, whose lower chains ran down sharply on both sides in the most remarkable shapes.

We hastened to the lower regions, and on the third day reached the river, whose course we followed.

We marched for about a week near this river, till we reached a bend, when it suddenly trended to the west, and thence pursued its uninterrupted course through the enor-

mous plains. I had been determined from the commencement of the journey to get as high as I could up this peak, and hence steered towards it.

On the second evening we reached the outer hills, and resolved to take our cattle as far as was safe regarding food for them, and then continue our journey afoot. It was the second half of June, the weather splendid, and the heat, at times, oppressive by day, while the nights remained extraordinarily cold. The farther we advanced in the mountains, the scantier food became for our cattle; but on that account they were all the safer during our absence from an attack of hostile Indians, who rarely venture so far into the mountains. On the third day, after crossing a considerable chain of mountains, we reached a small glen, which, on the east side, was enclosed by precipices, and on the south-west offered an open view of the mountains of Old Park. It was covered with good grass, amply supplied with pine-wood, and watered by a beautiful stream, which forced its way through the ravine by which we had entered. This spot exactly satisfied our purpose, as it was remote from regular paths, protected against possible storms, and could be easily defended. Hence we formed our camp here, conveyed our traps under overarching rocks, where they were protected against storm and rain, and hunted for some days in the neighborhood in order to provide those who remained behind with food for some time. I had selected Tiger to accompany me, and wished only to take one other of my comrades with me, while the other four remained in camp. I proposed that John, Mac, and Clifton should draw lots as to who should accompany me; but the two latter gave way in favor of John, who gratefully accepted.

On the morning of our departure I rolled up my large bear-skin, and sewed straps to it, in order to be able to carry

it on my back ; John and Tiger did the same with buffalo-hides ; and, ere long, all our preparations for a start were completed.

We walked bravely up the mountains, from one chain to the other ; Tiger being ahead, and Trusty behind. Sometimes we came to paths along which we went pleasantly ; at others we crept on hands and feet up the steep granitic strata ; and with every hour we had a more extensive view to the west. On the first day we covered a considerable distance ; at least five and twenty miles. Towards evening we came to a stream ; and though it was still early, we halted, as we found plenty of scrub in the vicinity with which to light a fire and roast our meat. The air was pure and clear, but it soon became very cold ; and so soon as the sun sank behind the mountains, we rolled ourselves up in our hides. We had collected a large stock of wood, in order to be able to make a blaze quickly, but determined to keep it up all night ; but we had forgotten our fatigue, which soon made us fall asleep, and we did not wake till daybreak.

Dawn aroused us, and animated the extensive landscape around us, whose glens were covered by a thick, damp fog, while a fresh breeze blew round the heights. We soon finished breakfast ; and, when the sun shone on the first peaks of the western mountains, we were again ascending the mountain in the direction of our object.

We soon recognized the impossibility of reaching these icy heights : still it appeared to us feasible to scale the back of the mountain farther to the north, as we noticed there, in a deep gap which ran almost to the summit, isolated spots free from snow.

We continued our journey, and soon reached snow, which only remained, however, on the north side. The air became

very cold, which rendered breathing difficult ; and we could not walk fast. Evening surprised us completely surrounded by snow ; and we had to go a long distance ere we found, under southern precipices, a spot where the sun had melted it away. Here we slept ; and my comrades woke me several times, and asked whether I was not frozen : they could not close an eye, while I was tolerably warm. They shook me again before daybreak, and we continued our journey, pulling our skins tightly round us.

At eleven in the forenoon, we at last scaled the highest point after excessive toil, and stood on a wide snow-field, which sloped down on the east to a hollow, behind which other snow mountains rose, and in the extreme distance the sky formed the background. Before us, in the west, stretched out a scene which I cannot find words to describe faithfully.

Our eyes were fixed for a long time on this grand landscape, and we found it difficult to bid it a last farewell ; but the cold warned us to start, so that night might not surprise us on these inhospitable heights, on which we did not see a sign of a living creature. It was one o'clock : we once more bade adieu to the cold, desolate spot which had afforded us this enchanting prospect, and then hastened to our last night's camping-place, where we arrived with frozen beards.

On the next day we joined our comrades again all right, found them in the best spirits, and our cattle rested and strong.

We started on the morning after our return to camp, and went back through Old Park, and up an arm of the Colorado. We followed its windings across the hills to the point where, as a mountain torrent, it formed the most exquisite cascades in falling over the rocks.

The next morning we finished packing our cattle at an early hour, and were about leaving our camp, when we saw, behind the rock in the valley, the smoke of many fires rising, which indicated a very large Indian camp. We must employ the precaution of first finding out to what tribe they belonged, and in what direction they were going: so we rode down into the glen, and concealed ourselves in the thick wood. Tiger and I then went to the rock, and climbed to the top of it, whence we could survey the valley on the opposite side. Who can describe our surprise on seeing at our feet a large, animated camp, with all the signs of civilization? From the numerous gay tents, pennants blew out in the fresh breeze; and, between, men, horses, and mules were moving in the strangest confusion. Here and there laggards crept out of the tents, and ran off to the stream to remove the last traces of sleep in its clear waters. Round the fire, other men, in the strangest costumes, were busied in preparing breakfast, while others were proceeding to and from the stream with horses and mules. Our amazement was great, and our joy knew no bounds. I pulled out the last remnant of a pocket-handkerchief, fastened it to the end of my rifle, and then discharged both barrels, while swinging my white flag high above my head. I saw that the attention of all the occupants of the camp was directed to us, and many arms were raised, pointing at us. A salvo of at least fifty shots answered my greeting, and handkerchiefs were waved in the air. We soon descended from our observatory, and hurried back to our comrades to impart the pleasant news to them; and we galloped along the stream, round the rock, and towards the camp, where our little party were received with a thundering hurrah.

In an instant we were surrounded by a crowd of curious

persons, who assailed us with a thousand questions. I gave Antonio and Königstein the charge of our cattle and traps, and then went with my other friends into camp, following the eager crowd, who led us to a large marquee in the centre, from which a long white pennant floated. A man came to meet me whose features seemed familiar to me at the first glance, and on whose face I could plainly read that I produced the same impression on him. We offered each other a hand with an inquiring glance; and, after the first few words of greeting, I recognized an old acquaintance, Lord S——, whom I had last seen, ten years before, on the east of the continent. The pleasure of meeting again was heightened by the most peculiar circumstances under which it took place.

We sat down at the fire; and I described my journey to this spot, and my plans for its continuation. A thousand questions interrupted my story; and, when we reached the present moment, we leapt back to the time of our last meeting, and followed the course of my life up to the commencement of the present tour.

The whole company consisted of about eighty persons: they had about one hundred animals with them, most of which they purchased of Indians at the fort where they left the steamer, and had also taken a dozen of the latter into their service.

I remained with my comrades four days in camp, during which time we were favored with the most splendid weather; and on the fifth we got ready, after breakfast, to continue our journey, and bade adieu to our friends, who intended to spend some time here. My friend S—— had supplied us with all the requisite stores for the pleasant continuation of our tour, had pressed upon us many luxuries, and given us a perfectly new outfit, so that we were now better equipped

than when we began our journey. Owl and Tiger were handsomely remembered; at which they felt very happy, hung themselves and their horses with numerous ornaments, and never let their looking-glasses out of their hand.

We were now reduced again to our own small number, but were in a very different state from that prior to our meeting with our new friends, as we had all our wants again supplied; and they now afforded us double enjoyment after the lengthened privation.

We had again reached a valley which runs between the Rocky Mountains, and is called New Park. The mountains on both sides drew very closely together here, and at some spots hardly left space for the river to pass, which was swollen by numerous torrents, and already had a rather powerful current.

One evening we reached a rather lofty point, where we found a little grass and a few live-oaks: the river rustled below us, scarce a mile distant, through the rocks, and received there a spring which ran from a small coppice near us. We had been awakened on the previous night by a sudden shower; and, as our traps had been lying about us uncovered, many of them were wet through before we could get them under shelter in the darkness. As the sky was also overcast this evening, we thought it advisable to put up our small tents. After supper, we gathered our traps together under the tarpaulin, on which we laid large stones, and then crept into our tents, after wishing each other good-night.

An icy-damp breeze awoke me suddenly; and, when I started out of my sleep, the storm drove the cold rain through the entrance of the tent into my face, and violently shook its sides. I roused Königstein, and was about to jump up, when a violent blast raised the tent above us, and

carried it off into the darkness, while streams of rain lashed us. All my companions shared the same fate, and ran about in the darkness seeking their blankets, hats, and articles of clothing. At the same time, we heard the scound of flying horses, probably ours, which, startled by the flapping of our tents, had torn themselves loose. We ran to the spot where we had secured them, and only found Czar and John's mare, but no sign of the others except the broken lassoes. In the darkness I had thrown my large bear-skin over me, and concealed my weapons under it. So I remained with Czar, turning my back to the storm, and bade him be quiet, while I saw the others running back and forwards like shadows.

The storm grew more furious still; and the powerful tornado seemed desirous of carrying away with it every thing that did not bend before it. I leant my shoulder against a young oak in order to keep on my feet; but the tree often bent so low as to touch the ground with its foliage. My comrades had disappeared, — at least I could not notice them anywhere; for the darkness was so dense that I could not see a yard before me. It was impossible to call to each other, as you could not even hear your own voice. At the same time the rain still poured down in almost a horizontal direction, and formed a stream round my feet. There was lightning in the north; but neither thunder nor lightning had approached us, until suddenly the eastern mountains were lit up by brilliant flashes, which displayed their white peaks, and the ground trembled beneath a tremendous clap of thunder. For more than an hour, the lightning did not cease for longer than a few seconds; and the thunder roared uninterruptedly between the hills. But at last the storm moved up the valley, and left an impenetrable darkness behind. We gradually came together again, and would assur-

edly have laughed at each other had this been the time for it: for we were wet to the skin; stood in the cold night breeze upon saturated, bottomless ground; and, what was worst of all, most of our cattle had bolted. It was simply impossible to light a fire: so we made no attempt to do so, as we could not seek dry materials in the darkness. Nothing was left us but to wait quietly till day arrived, which, on this occasion, seemed to delay terribly.

At length, the new light gleamed over the hills, and we could soon distinguish objects around. We had a melancholy prospect: here lay a wet buffalo-robe, a blanket, or a leathern jacket; there some hats were half buried in the mud; farther on, we saw one of our tents hanging on an oak: wherever we looked, storm and rain had left traces of their destruction. A joyous surprise was prepared for us with the return of light, — we saw honest Jack grazing higher up the valley, and Königstein's cream-color following him. Tiger and Owl soon set out to seek the other horses, which would be easily found if no accident had happened to them; and there were no thick woods in this valley to hide them from us. We fetched up Jack and the cream-color; and, while the Indians followed the trail of the horses, we sought, under the stones, dry grass and roots with which to light a fire, which caused us great difficulty, and only succeeded after several failures. Then we put up sticks round it in order to dry our traps, and finally looked up those which had been blown away. The articles under the tarpaulin had remained quite dry, as the water ran through the brushwood on which we had laid them, while the heavy stones kept the cover down. In time, we got every thing in order again; and about noon we saw our Indians coming down the valley, and driving our animals before them, which they had found a long way in the moun-

tains in two parties. During the whole day, we were occupied in repairing damages. The tents had to be mended, the broken lassoes reknotted, the saddles and bridles cleaned from mud and dirt: in short, the whole day was spent in getting ready to start again. The next morning, however, we mounted again, and no one could notice that our equipment had suffered severely.

It was a warm afternoon when we cut off a large bend which the river described, and, riding over a grassy plain, got several miles away from it. The sun shone hotly on our backs; the horses walked with drooping heads through the tall grass; and we jolted silently in our saddles, every now and then putting straight the embroidered blankets on which we sat, as folds in them become disagreeable in hot weather. I was riding on the left wing of our cavalcade, and had turned to 'Trusty, who was stalking behind Czar with hanging tail, when, on looking across the prairie, I fancied I saw about half a mile off two human forms conceal themselves in the grass. Without checking my horse, I called Tiger up, and imparted to him what I fancied I had seen. He advised me not to look round, as he was riding on my right hand, and without exciting suspicion, while talking to me, could keep in sight the entire plain on our left. We had been riding on for a long time, when Tiger suddenly pulled round his piebald, and galloped across the prairie in the direction where I believed I had seen the men. We stopped to look after him, and watched him ride through the grass, but presently turn his horse towards us. He told me they were probably Blackfoot Indians: however, he was of opinion that we must be on our guard here, so that they might not get hold of any of our horses; for these Indians had eyes in the darkness, and could walk more softly than sleep.

During the following night, we again encamped on the river, and fastened our horses near camp, where Trusty mounted guard over them. He appeared extremely restless, got up several times, went growling round our camp, and barked frequently ; but our rest was not otherwise disturbed. Early the next morning, as we were folding up our furs, Tiger returned to the fire, saturated with dew. He had gone over the neighborhood, and said there was a number of Blackfeet close by : the dog had prevented them from approaching our camp at night ; but they could not be an entire tribe, or else they would have ventured an attack by day. He had found several tracks going round our camp at some distance.

We followed the river to the spot where the Medicine-bow River falls into it ; and Tiger and Owl made an excursion along its banks, and brought in the news that some forty Blackfeet had crossed the river, probably expecting that we would follow the Platte farther up to the Black Mountains, to watch for us, and attack us in the narrow passes. They told us these enemies would not leave us till we had passed that region, and we must constantly keep a watchful eye on them. We camped on this side of the Medicine-bow River, and talked over our farther tour over the camp-fire ; and Owl was of opinion that we should do better by following the course of this river, and effecting our retreat through Lamarie Plains, between the Medicine and Black Mountains, as on this route we should be less troubled by Indians than on the great Eastern Prairies, and, with the exception of buffaloes and wild horses, might expect to find much more game there. We heard Tiger, who was of the same opinion, and soon agreed to follow this road.

We fished in the river till it grew quite dark, and had just put supper on the fire, when Tiger and Owl took

their rifles, and, after telling us to keep a bright look-out for the Blackfeet, went up the river, and soon disappeared. I ordered Königstein to mount guard at the end of the small wood in which we had camped, at the spot where it joined the Platte, and promised to relieve him in an hour. We thus changed sentries until about eleven o'clock, when I relieved John. It was not very dark, although the moon was not shining; and, sitting on the ground, I could not only see across the Platte, but distinguish objects in the grass for some distance. Trusty lay by my side, with his head resting on his crossed paws: suddenly, however, he raised his nose, and I heard his low growl, which I stopped by a wave of my hand. He kept his nose turned obstinately up stream, in which direction I also kept my eyes fixed on the grass. I felt with the hand I had laid on Trusty that his attention was growing greater; for he began trembling all over, which he did when he was forced to master his growing excitement.

Still I could not distinguish any thing that appeared to me strange. The grass in front of me was not tall, and there were but few patches of scrub. All at once I fancied that a bush, about fifty yards from me, had moved; but it might be imagination, as I had been gazing at it so intently. A profound silence brooded over the landscape, which was only interrupted by the continuous monotonous rustling of the river. In our camp no voice was audible; and the bright fire, which had lit up the surrounding trees and bushes, had burned down, and only indicated its position by a glimmering light. When I took my post half an hour previously, Owl and Tiger had not returned, and since then I had not heard them arrive. The air was very damp and cold, and the grass around me felt quite wet. I now fancied I could be certain that the bush had moved. I rose a

little, and looked at it more sharply: it moved again, and a dark object, in the shape of a large stone, slowly rose out of the grass. Now I could entertain no doubt it was a living creature; but what could it be? That was a matter of indifference to me, so long as it was not either Tiger or Owl, and they would not approach our camp so cautiously and suspiciously. It could be none but a Blackfoot. I rose on one knee, cautiously lifted my rifle, and aimed, as well as I could for the darkness, at the object whose indistinct outline now covered nearly the whole bush.

Bang! the flame flashed from the rifle; and a hollow plump into the river followed a few seconds later, before the smoke had risen on the damp atmosphere. I looked at the dark, shining surface of the water, and noticed that large circles surrounded a black spot, and were moving with it towards the middle of the stream. I fired my second barrel at it: I clearly saw through the gloom that the motion of the water became very violent at the moment, but then it was all over; and the next minute the current flowed on as usual, and nothing on its surface revealed what was passing in its depths. I had scarce fired the second shot when my comrades dashed up under arms. I quickly told them what had happened; and we remained under arms, awaiting the return of our Indians, of whom we had as yet heard nothing. About an hour later, they returned; and Tiger at once asked why we had been firing: then he told us what had happened to him, and that my shots had robbed them of several Blackfeet scalps. They had crossed the river a little higher up, at a point where it was shallow, and lay down on its banks, as they expected that the savages would return during the night to try and get hold of our horses. Shortly before I fired, Tiger had heard and seen the branches of a neighboring bush parted; but after

that all became quiet again. Tiger fancied that their number was considerable; but we had nothing more to fear from them on this night, and could go to sleep in peace. However, we posted sentries till daybreak, when I and Tiger examined the spot at which I had fired. We found that my bullet had cut away a spray in the centre of the bush, and noticed the track of an Indian, which was distinctly marked on the bank; and Tiger recognized it as that of a Blackfoot. Owl swam across the river, and examined the opposite shore to see whether he had landed there, but could not discover any sign, and, pointing to the river, supposed he was sleeping under that.

We slept quietly till eight o'clock, then breakfasted, and packed our animals so as to continue our journey on the new plan. Tiger said that the Blackfeet would be cheated out of a day, for they were awaiting us farther down the Platte; and, if they had not their horses with them, they could not catch us up before morning. If their number was large, however, as he believed, they had their horses with them, and would be camping in the thickets on the opposite side of Medicine-bow River. It was nearly noon when we struck camp and marched up the river. After riding past a stony knoll, round which the river described a short curve, we reached a stream flowing between deep banks, which fell into the Platte, and was densely overgrown with alders. The spot pleased us to spend the night at; and we were engaged in unpacking our cattle, when suddenly a fearful yell rang behind us, which came towards us, accompanied by a dense cloud of dust. "The Blackfeet!" all shouted, and seized their weapons. Tiger, however, shouted to us to follow him, as he led his piebald through the alders into the stream; and the next minute all the cattle were left in charge of Antonio, who fastened them to the bushes.

We had scarce returned to the bank when a body of forty Indians dashed up to us like a tornado: lying behind their horses' necks, and covering their left side with their large shields, they allowed a very small portion of their bodies to be seen. We permitted them to come within fifty yards before we fired. The band hesitated; and we saw through the dust several horses lying on the ground, and many of the horsemen engaged in taking others up behind them, while the greater number galloped back to the hill, and uttered a frightful yell. They had not galloped far, however, when one of them, mounted on a powerful black horse, darted to their head, and, casting himself in their way, swung his long lance before them. His horse reared in front of the flying horde, and the thundering voice of the leader distinctly reached us through the yelling. At the next instant the band turned back, with the warrior on the black horse in front of them. We had reloaded; and I shouted to my comrades to expend but one bullet, and reserve the other for shorter range. The savages had galloped up to within about the same distance as before, when I shouted, "Fire!" and aimed myself at the leader of the band. The black horse reared, and fell over with its rider; while another horse fell dead by its side, whose rider ran with the speed of an arrow after his comrades, who were now flying in the utmost confusion. The rider of the black horse, however, had scarce fallen with it ere he crept from under it; and, at the same instant, we saw Tiger leap out of the willow-bushes on the river bank, and, swinging his tomahawk, catch up the Blackfoot warrior with a few leaps. The latter fell back a pace, and threw his iron axe at Tiger with such force, that, missing its mark, it flew far out into the river. Tiger now buried his axe with lightning speed in the chest of his recoiling foe, and both fell to the ground

like two intertwined snakes. It was the work of a few minutes ; and the yell of the flying Indians was still ringing in our ears when we dashed up to the combatants in order to help Tiger. It was no longer necessary, however ; for he rose from off his lifeless foe, and, setting his knee on the other's bent-back neck, he passed his knife round the head, and tore off his scalp. During this time, Owl had scalped the other Blackfoot ; and our Indians danced frantically round the dead men, waving the reeking scalps and knives, while the blood poured down Tiger's back from a gaping wound in his left shoulder. At length they concluded their dance of victory, and then our Indians plundered their slain foes and the dead horses. The dress of these Blackfeet is made of leather, with remarkable taste, adorned with paintings and long fringes, porcupine-quills, shells, scalp-locks, and colored pebbles : the leather is smoked of a very dark hue, and gives the savages a gloomy and terrifying aspect. Their weapons are lances, bows and arrows, tomahawks, and knives : only a few have fire-arms.

I examined Tiger's wound, which had only cut the flesh obliquely, and was produced by his enemy's knife ; while the latter had a bullet through his left thigh, a gaping wound in his chest, and a stab in his heart. Tiger had run down to the willows on the river, without our noticing him, after the first attack of the Blackfeet, and had thence fired at the chief, whom he afterwards killed with his knife. " Now," he said, " we can sleep. The Blackfeet have lost their head, and will go home and tell how the Delawares have some more of their scalps in their tents : their squaws will not even take their dead with them, and not let them sleep with their fathers."

We camped close to the stream, but posted sentries all through the night, as I feared lest we might have to oppose

a nocturnal surprise. The night, however, passed undisturbed; but we heard incessantly a fearful yelling of wolves, which prowled round our camp, but, owing to the huge fire, did not dare approach the corpses, which lay not far from us in the grass. The next morning we quitted the spot, for which movement the numerous wolves were watching; and they attacked the dead Indians and horses almost before we had crossed the stream.

CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE PRAIRIE.

WE hastened up the river for five days, during which time we crossed a number of small streams which fell into it. Then we reached the eastern spurs of the Medicine Mountains, in which the river rises, and pours over the rocks in the shape of a large torrent. Here we crossed it; and, following the base of these hills in the plain, we reached, on the second evening, a small stream, which flows for at least a hundred miles due east through this broad plain. Here we refreshed ourselves and camped, though it was early in the afternoon, and amused ourselves with shooting geese and swans. On the next evening we came to a similar lake, with fresh-water streams on its western side, so that we again had a splendid camp, and took advantage of the opportunity to bathe in the lake.

During the next day our road again ran over a desolate, melancholy plain; but towards evening we saw a low wood in the distance, and reached another arm of the river which runs through the Black Mountains to Fort Laramie.

The next morning we left the river and went south, and for the whole day without finding water. The sun sank behind the hills, and nowhere was there a tree or a sign of water. The grass, too, was bad; but our cattle were very weary, and we, too, longed for rest. We made a poor fire of *bois de vache* and small bushes, large enough to cook our supper: then we put up our tents, and secured our traps

under the tarpaulin on a bed of stones; for the sky was overcast, and led to expectation of rain. At nightfall it began to blow and rain, and went on the whole night till daybreak, when the clouds gathered together again, and, hanging on the base of the mountains, displayed the snow-peaks brilliantly illumined by the sun. We quickly started, and marched from this disagreeable spot, looking for pleasanter signs ahead. At length, towards noon, wood rose again from the barren surface. We drove our animals into a quicker pace; and, in a few hours, were resting again on a river fringed by trees, upon glorious grass, which our starving cattle eagerly devoured. It was still very early, and we all felt inclined to go hunting, as the rain had refreshed the country; and the verdure of the forest and the meadow does the eyesight good. A few preferred fishing in the neighboring stream: several went up the river to hunt, while I went down it, accompanied by Trusty only. I had gone about a couple of miles along the skirt of the wood, when I saw something moving on the prairie behind some very low bushes. I crept cautiously up to the last bush, and before me stood, at about the distance of a hundred and twenty yards, a herd of some forty large and old giant stags. The beautiful animals, the pride of the animal world, stood in a long line before me, with their faces turned to me, and raised their powerful antlers like a forest of horns. It was a sight whose beauty only a sportsman can estimate. I lay for some minutes lost in contemplation; but, when I raised my knee and rifle, the whole herd turned and galloped past me. I had long had my eye on the largest stag; for its antlers rose far above the others with their broad lines. I aimed behind the shoulder, and fired; heard the bullet distinctly go home, and saw, that, though it was bleeding profusely, it kept up with the others. The next largest stag

being just behind this one, I fired the second barrel at it; heard the thud of the bullet again, and saw that it was mortally wounded; but it, too, remained in line, and I watched the stags till they disappeared a long way off in a hollow.

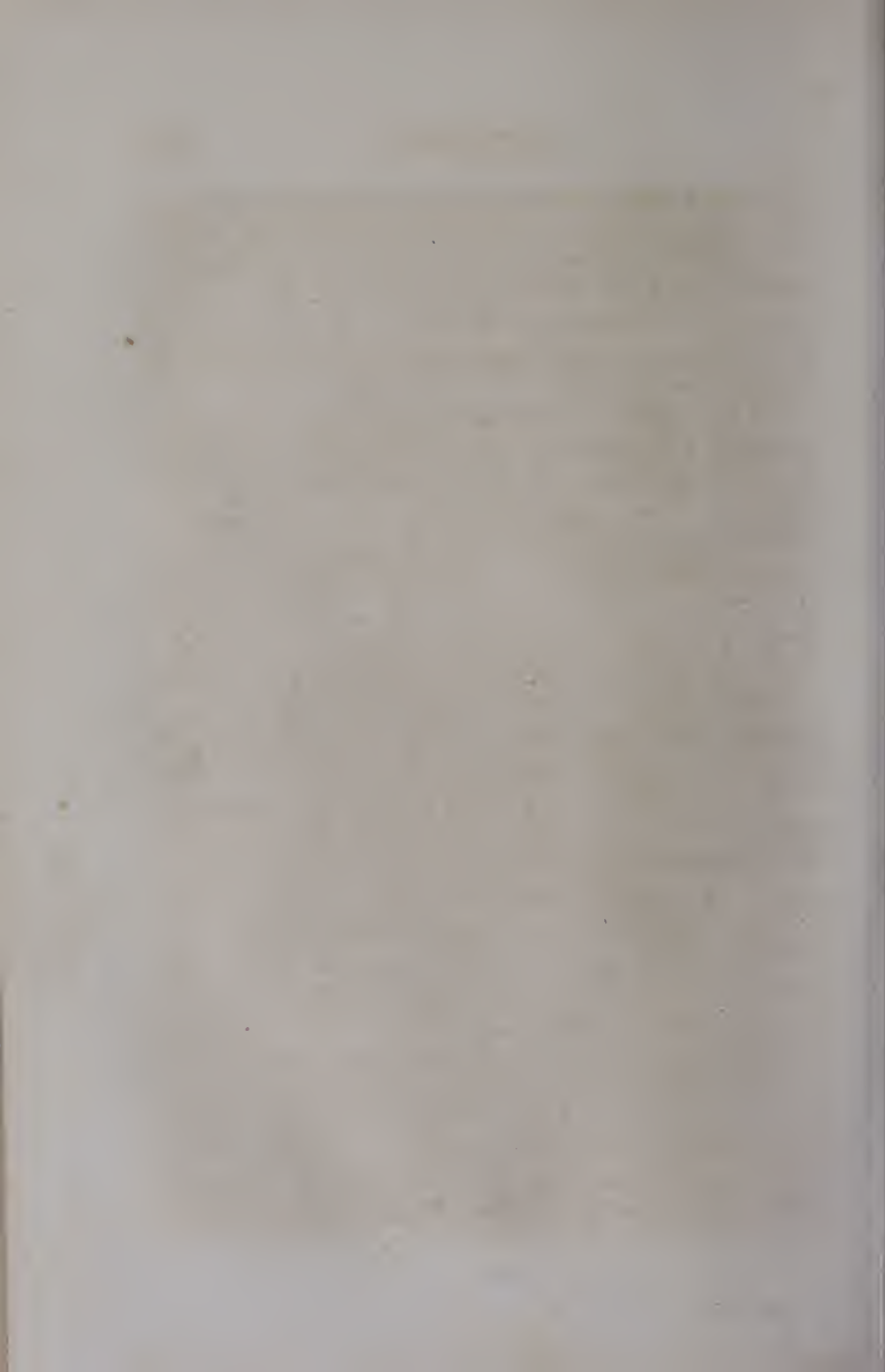
I loaded; and, on reaching the spot where the stags were hit, Trusty at once put his nose to the blood-trail and stopped, looking up at me. I made him a sign that it was all right; and, when he had gone a little distance, he went off slightly to the right, took up the trail of the second stag, and then again pointed with his nose to the ground, while looking at me inquiringly. I again urged him on; and he went first to one trail, then to the other, till I was able to look down into the valley, where I saw the two stags lying dead, hardly ten yards apart. I hastened up to them, and counted, on the antlers of the largest, eight and thirty times, and on the smaller one six and twenty: the length of the two antlers was between five and six feet; and their weight, between thirty and forty pounds. After looking at them for a while in delight, I broke them up, gave Trusty his share, cut out a couple of grinders as a recollection, and then went back to camp, when my comrades were equally pleased at the result of my sport. The other hunters had also been fortunate, and had killed a fat buffalo, while the anglers had pulled a number of large fish out of the river. Owl went with Antonio and Königstein to my stags, in order to fetch their skins and meat; and I requested them to bring me the antlers of the largest one, as I wished, were it possible, to carry them home. Though we liked the place so much, we left it again next morning, abundantly supplied with the best game; and Jack trotted after us, with the enormous antlers on the top of his packages.

Before us the valley wound between partly wooded low hills, behind which the higher base now rose. For several

days we marched along this valley, till on one afternoon we looked down from a hill on the blue crystalline waters of the Southern Platte, which, coming down from the Medicine Hills, rustled through the valley at our feet. The river was large even here, and shot, with the speed that characterizes the streams in this country, and with many windings, between its wood-clad banks. Before us, where the river described a sharp curve, the banks were stony on both sides, and seemed, from time immemorial, to have been used by the inhabitants of these countries as a ford. At this moment, when, probably for the first time, the eyes of white men rested on this ford, a countless herd of buffaloes was occupied in crossing. They were coming southward from the mountains, and pressed shoulder to shoulder in dense masses to water in the river; while others came down the hills in a black line. The roars of these thirsty wanderers filled the air, and rang through the hills in a thousand echoes. They dashed by hundreds impetuously from the high bank into the deep, rapid stream, on either side of the ford, and drifted with it into the dark overarching wood. We stopped for a long time, gazing down at this scene, and awaiting the end of the herd, whose head had disappeared some time previously in the valley on our left, while dense masses still continued to pour down without a check from the hills to the water. At length, at the end of an hour, only a few laggards came, after at least five thousand buffaloes had crossed the river; and yet the number of these animals is said to be quite insignificant compared with what it was twenty years ago. We were obliged to let the wanderers pass, as we also wanted to cross the river, though in the opposite direction; and we should have run a risk of the whole herd marching over us, had we got in their way. We now rode down into the river; but, although so great



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a number of huge animals had passed through it, the water was as clear and bright as if a stone had never been stirred on its bottom. We watered our cattle, and followed the path by which the buffaloes had found their way to this ford, on the supposition that they had rendered it quite passable, and that they had come from the southern prairies to which we were bound.

We had scaled the first hill, when we saw, about two miles off, a few buffaloes trotting towards us, which had probably lagged behind, and now wanted to catch up with the herd. We rode, about thirty yards off the path, to a spot where we were covered by rocks, and commanded the sloping path down to the water. Ere long we heard the heavy trot of the approaching animals on the stony ground; and presently several cows, and behind them a fat old bull, came past us. We all fired together; and the old bull rolled over and over down the slope, and lay dead at the bottom. We took, as usual, its tongue, marrow-bones, and loins, and left the rest to those that came after us.

We could not have found a finer road through these hills: broad and trodden smooth, it wound along the crags, so that we were often able to advance at a quick amble. It frequently ran over dizzy precipices, whence we surveyed the pleasant valleys, whose dark shadow seemed to invite us; while the hot sun, and its reflection from the bare rocks over which we were marching, was hardly rendered endurable by the fresh breeze blowing up here. We crossed a number of small streams, which came down from the western hills, and all flowed to the Platte, until, at the end of a week, we again reached the latter river at the point where a large affluent, coming from the Bighorn, joined it.

We crossed this southern arm of the Platte, and camped on the other side of it, in order to grant our cattle a few

days' rest there, where the most splendid grass, and a cool, thick wood, covered its bank.

Our horses and pack-cattle were recruited, and we, too, had recovered from the fatigue of our journey over the last mountains: hence we set out again, and, casting many a parting glance at the Bighorn, we followed the Platte in an eastern direction, till at noon we reached a well-trodden path which runs from Fort St. Brain on the southern arm of this river down to the Missouri. We crossed it, and proceeded more to the south-west, in order to escape the numerous Indian hordes going up and down this path. A few days after, we crossed the hills we had seen from our last camp; and the sky now rested before us on the interminable horizon of the prairie.

For nearly a week we marched over this green plain with scarce any change in the scene. At length hills rose on the horizon; and we soon saw again the darker verdure of forests, which received us into their shady gloom towards evening. In this tour we were so broiled by the sun that we entered the wood with delight, and at once resolved to rest a few days here, if, as we anticipated, there was water at hand. We hurried along a buffalo-path into the depths of the forest, and soon heard to our delight the rustling of a neighboring river, whose banks we speedily reached; and it proved to be a rapidly flowing stream overhung by tall ferns. We unloaded our cattle in a small clearing off our path, lit a fire, and really built tabernacles, as we made a roof of bushes between several young oaks, which kept off every sunbeam, and in whose immediate vicinity were trees enough to tie up our cattle every night.

After resting our cattle for some days, I went out one morning after breakfast to hunt, and have a nearer view of the country round. I rode in a southern direction, followed

by Trusty, and, in going off, said to my comrades, that, if I lost my way, I would follow the course of one of these streams till it joined the river; then I would wait till they came to me, in which they could not fail, as we knew that all these small streams joined.

In a few hours I had crossed several of these streams, and had ridden out of a wood into a small prairie glade, when suddenly a horse Indian darted towards me with a furious yell from a thicket of tall oaks, and swung his bow over his head, while his long lance hung on his right arm. It was too late to dismount and make use of my rifle. I quickly drew my revolver, put Czar at a gallop, and flew towards the Indian, turning my horse to the left, as he on his right side could make less use of his bow than I could of my revolver. However, he soon perceived my object, and guided his chestnut to get on my left hand; and we galloped on in the same direction some distance out of shot. Suddenly, however, he turned and dashed towards me, with his bow raised over the head of his rapid steed. I, too, had urged Czar to his full speed; and, when we were about sixty yards apart, I fired. I had not expected to hit; still it was possible; and I had five shots left in my weapon. The savage's horse leaped on one side, stumbled, and fell forward on its chest. A few blows of the whip forced it to make a last effort; but it then sank lifeless under its rider, who disappeared like lightning in the not very high grass behind it.

At the moment when I saw his horse fall, I turned mine away, and pulled up about one hundred yards distant. The horse lay with its back turned to me, and the Indian was concealed behind its belly. I took out my telescope to try and get a better sight of my enemy: but it was of no use; he had disappeared. All at once I saw an arrow shoot up behind the horse, and fly towards me in a large curve; but

I easily pulled Czar out of its way, and it sank harmless by my side, with its point in the grass. While the Indian was firing the arrow, I distinctly saw his hands holding the bow projecting above the horse's belly. I leapt from Czar's back, threw the bridle over his shoulder, and fired with my rifle at the horse's back. I heard the thud of the bullet ; but the savage did not show himself. I reloaded both rifle and revolver, and walked at the same distance round the dead horse till I got to the side on which its hind-quarters lay. I could now look under its belly, and saw the Indian creep under the animal's chest, and roll himself up behind it in a ball : still, the surface by which he was hidden was now too small to cover him entirely, and I could distinguish the upper part of his body. I fired again, and noticed a quick, convulsive movement on the part of the foe, but only at the moment of firing. I had recourse to my glass once more, and saw that his head was now under the horse's chest, but his legs lay behind its neck, and he was peeping at me between its forelegs. I reloaded, and now, having become much calmer, I aimed again at my mark. I fired, and at once saw the savage throw up his legs, then try to rise, but fall back again. I drew closer to him, and watched him through the glass, as he had got a little way from the horse. He did not stir, and lay on his back ; but he was an Indian, and such a man a white man must not trust even in death. I fired again, and heard my bullet go home ; but he remained motionless. After reloading, I walked with cocked rifle nearer, and found that life had left him, and that he had my second bullet in his right hip, the third in his head over the right ear, and the last in his chest ; while I found one bullet in the horse's chest, and another in its back. I only gazed for a few minutes at the corpse, took his bow, and quiver of arrows, hung them on my horse, and speedily beat a retreat,

as the comrades of the dead man were certainly not far off, and might very easily be on the road to the spot, guided by my shots. I rode back on my trail, and soon reached camp, when I told my friends what had happened.

Tiger was out hunting, and not yet returned. I ordered a rapid start, had the horses packed, and every thing ready to be off. We had scarce completed our preparations, when Tiger, bathed in perspiration, came back along my track, and said he had heard my shots, followed their direction, and found the Indian and his horse. He was a Pawnee, whose tribe was certainly close at hand; and when his companions missed him they would seek him, and easily find us too; in which case we should run a great danger, as they were brave men. He quickly packed his horse, and in a few minutes we left camp. Tiger rode ahead into the stream, and we followed him, riding singly down the water, which offered us no obstacles beyond here and there a fallen tree, as it ran over pebbles, was nowhere deep, and had flat banks. Evening arrived, and the sun was already low on the western horizon. We marched almost constantly in the stream, till we found on its right bank a wide plain covered with pebbles, when we turned off to the south at a right angle. We reached on the other side of the plain a similar stream, which was also overshadowed by trees; entered a thicket, and dismounted to let our horses graze without unsaddling them, and to await nightfall. The moon was already up; and, though her light did not brilliantly illumine the country, it was sufficiently strong to enable us to distinguish objects at a slight distance. We then left our hiding-place, marched out of the thicket into the prairie, and urged our horses on at a quick pace. Without interruption, we hurried on through the silence of the night, which was only disturbed by the howling of the

countless wolves, and the roar of the buffaloes we put up, until, shortly before daybreak, the moon withdrew her light from us, and the darkness did not allow us to advance. We sat down on the damp grass round our cattle, and waited till the first new light appeared on the eastern horizon; then we remounted, and hurried on towards a distant strip of wood which rose before us on the prairie. The sun was standing high in the heavens when we reached it, and led our wearied animals to a stream. Here we unsaddled, and let them graze, hobbled, in a small glade, while we prepared breakfast at a small fire.

We were very tired, and, after the meal, could hardly keep awake. We posted sentries in turn to watch the plain behind us, and kept lively by smoking, and telling stories. Our cattle wanted sleep more than grass, and we were sorry at being obliged to saddle them after a short rest; but Tiger and Owl insisted on our going on, as we were certainly pursued by the Pawnees, and could only escape them by keeping the start we had on them. It was hardly noon when we started again, and spurred our horses on towards the southern prairie. They only moved because they felt the sharp steel in their sides; and we were obliged to lead the mules by lassoes, and appoint a man to drive them, as they refused to follow. The heat was oppressive; there was not a breath of air; and the plants on the plain we crossed hung their leaves in exhaustion; an incessant buzzing of the insects in the grass filled the motionless air; and a trembling, dazzling light lay on the wide expanse around us. The sweat ran in streams from our cattle, and was mixed with the blood which the countless mosquitoes sucked from their coat, so that under their belly their color could not be distinguished. But, not noticing their sufferings or fatigue, we urged them on, and looked back at the distant horizon to

see whether our pursuers appeared on it, till the sun sank, and in the distance a wood rose, which crossed the prairie to the east like a mist. Tiger said that we should be safe there: this was the wood running along the Arkansas, and the horses of the Pawnees could not go so far without a rest. The sun mercifully withdrew his beams; and the moon's cool light showed us our road, when we expended the last strength of our cattle, and so reached the forest.

We had ridden over fifty miles since yesterday morning, a greater part of the distance without any path, through rather tall grass, and over stony soil. On the whole route we had been exposed to the burning sun, and only once had been able to cool our fevered lips at a stream. We rode into the wood, and followed a buffalo-path, but had not ridden far, when Tiger, who was ahead, stopped; saying he had lost the path, and could go no farther. The foliage over us was so thick, that only here and there the moon's pale light stole through it, and only a few leaves and small spots on the branches glistened like silver in the obscurity. We turned our horses in all directions, seeking the path; but, after going a few yards, were continually stopped by the hanging creepers. Tiger now leapt from his horse, and sought in the darkness dry grass, which he twisted into a torch, and came to me to light it. It soon spread a light around; and while I held it up, Tiger collected a larger stock of dry grass, and made a thicker torch, which we lit, and soon found an issue from this impenetrable thicket.

We soon reached a small arm of the Arkansas, on whose fresh, cool water we and our cattle fell insanely. We now lit a fire, though there was no grass for the cattle near at hand, as the small, open spot on the bank of the rushing stream was surrounded by a dense wall of forest. At this moment, however, rest was more necessary than food; and

our cattle had scarce been freed from their load, when they all sank on the ground, and fell into a deep sleep : we did the same, and, after drinking several draughts, fell back on our saddles, and forgot that we still stood a risk of being caught up by the Pawnees. We had collected our fire into a small pile, so that it only coaled, and spread no light over the crests of the tall trees, which might possibly have been noticed from the prairie. We slept, without moving a limb, till the turkeys in our neighborhood awoke us ; and, though Tiger and Owl protested most strongly against it, we shot four of the birds, resolved to defend ourselves to the best of our ability if the shots betrayed us to our pursuers.

Tiger now mounted his piebald, rode through the river, and soon disappeared in the forest on the other bank, where he sought pasture for our cattle. In half an hour he returned, and told us that, between this wood and the Arkansas, there was a fine prairie, on which we should find excellent grass for them. We followed him across the river, and out of the wood, to a small glade, which was overshadowed by close-growing trees. Here we camped, and prepared breakfast, while our cattle greedily browsed on the fresh, dewy grass. We rested here till the sun cast the shadow of the forest far across the prairie : then we set out again, and rode to the Arkansas, which here rolls its foaming waters between low banks.

The sun had just set when we came to a stream running towards the Arkansas, and covered on this side with bushes, while, on the other, the most splendid grass hung over its crystalline waters. We watered our cattle, and then rode down stream on the other side, as the pasturage seemed more luxuriant lower down. In a few minutes we reached a small cascade, where the stream fell over rocks about ten feet, and below this fall formed a deep basin,

whose bottom was also composed of stone slabs, and on one side was overhung by rock strata about twenty feet in height, which covered a considerable space near the basin, whose bottom and sides also consisted of bare stone. We camped on the top of this overhanging ledge, as a number of medlar-trees grew there, to which we could fasten our horses at night round the camp; and at the same time the richest grass grew all around. We unsaddled, hobbled the horses in the grass, lit a fire, and put the supper before it, and then went to bathe in the basin under the rock. After we had cooled and refreshed ourselves, we supped, and then prepared our resting-place; but John took his weapons and skins, and said he would sleep on the stream under the crag, as it was much cooler and pleasanter there, and he should not feel the heavy dew so much as in the grass. We wished him pleasant dreams, and shouted to him not to let himself be devoured by a bear.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE COMANCHES.

OUR route ran from here through the most pleasing and rich countries, crossed by numerous streams running eastward. We had been marching for nearly a month through this pleasant region to the south, and had crossed the Red Arm as well as several other affluents of the Arkansas, when one evening we reached the Saline.

We crossed the river, and went through the wood on its south side, and had just unsaddled our horses, and picketed them in the prairie, when suddenly several hundred horse Indians came round the nearest angle in the wood, and halted a few yards from us, while we gazed at each other in amazement. At the head of them rode a single Indian, with a smoking piece of wood, who at the sight of us gave a piercing yell. We saw that great excitement was produced in the ranks of the caravan, and that the men collected in the foreground, while the squaws and children hurried to the rear, and hastily drew back the numerous pack animals. We, too, ran at full speed to our horses, and were removing them to the bushes, when Tiger shouted to me that they were Comanches. The name at once tranquillized me; and I told him I believed they would do nothing hostile to us when they heard my name. He went towards the savages, and shouted my name to them: upon

which they raised loud cries ; and an old man, on a large mule, trotted towards us, in whom I recognized my friend Pahajuka. He was followed by his squaw, and both testified their joy at seeing me. The whole band was now coming towards us, when Pahajuka checked them in a loud voice and with commanding gestures. They turned away, and disappeared again, soon after, round the angle of the wood. He told me his people were impudent, and would rob us if he did not keep them away, and for that reason he had ordered them to camp lower down the river. Both the old folks dismounted, and sat down on their buffalorobes, while Antonio lighted a fire before them. I sat down with them, and gave them a couple of cigars. We prepared our supper, which my savage friends shared and enjoyed ; and the squaw gave full vent to her eloquence. She told me they were going to the sources of the Puerco, on the western side of the Sacramento Mountains, where a great council of all the Comanche tribes was about to be held.

The next morning, Pahajuka, his squaw and daughter, again shared our breakfast, and then prepared to go on, while we resolved to rest for the day. The two old people were very sorry at being obliged to leave us, but promised without fail to come to my house after the great council on Puerco River, and remain some time.

We halted this day on the Northern Canadian River in order to rest our cattle, which had the most splendid pasture here ; and the next morning marched south again. Towards evening we reached a spring which ran out of a low range of hills. Here we found a pleasant camping-spot, and followed the course of this stream on the following day to the Southern Canadian River, on whose bank we unsaddled, after crossing it with much difficulty. From this

point we altered our course, as we went up stream, in order to reach its springs, the southernmost of which well up in the Sacramento Mountains, at the point where the latter form a low pass which separates them from the mountain-chain which runs parallel with the Puerco River, in nearly a southern direction, to the San Saba Mountains, and form an extensive rich valley between themselves and the former river.

Our road now ran along the south side of the Canadian River to the west, and in a few days the Sacramento Mountains rose before us. We reached an affluent of this river, on which, some miles farther up, the iron stone was said to lie with which Tiger told us the god of hunting had killed a Weico. As it would not take us very far out of our course if we rode to it, I requested Tiger to lead us to it. Before sunset we reached a prairie, round which the little wooded stream ran in a semicircle; and saw, in the centre of it, the stone rising about three feet out of the short grass.

We slept here for the night, and had to hear several times the story of the Weico who was slain with this stone. The next morning we left the river, marching westward along the mountains, and camped again on the banks of Canadian River. For about a week we followed this course to the spurs of the Sacramento Mountains, where we left the river, and went along the former to the south, until, in a fortnight, we reached the sources of the Red River, which flow from the eastern slopes of these mountains. We rode up them to their source among the granite rocks, where we found at a considerable height a splendid camping-place, on which we found the remains of several Indian camps, made by foot Indians, who do not carry large tents with them.

The springs at which we camped welled up under im-

mense granite crags, which rose in terraces, and formed in front of them a small basin, in which they collected and flowed in a rivulet through the plain on which our cattle were grazing, and thence to the wide prairies which we had recently crossed.

Day had scarce broken on the next morning, when we prepared breakfast; and the sun had not risen over the eastern horizon, and the valleys were still covered with mist, when we were already mounted, and going up the path, to take advantage of the cool of the morning, as, during the day, we might calculate on great heat upon these barren rocks. The morning was splendid. The fresh, cool mountain breeze refreshed us; and every plant, every blade of grass between the rocks, seemed to enjoy the treat. We had ascended a considerable height when the sun spread its beams over the earth. Our path ascended from hill to hill, till, at about ten o'clock, we reached a barren table-land, which in some parts was broad and others narrow, and overshadowed by crags. It was now very hot, however, in spite of the violent breeze; but a rest without any shade could not refresh us. The stony strata along which we rode, and which at times were deeply trodden in, reflected the sunbeams, and rendered the heat almost unendurable. Our animals dripped with perspiration, and trotted on with hanging heads, as if anxious to get away from this glowing surface. Nowhere, however, did we see a spot to receive us in its shade, as the sun was vertical, and the few lofty rocks we passed cast no shadow. Our cattle became more and more tired, and at last hardly able to move, when the sun had sunk a long way on the western horizon. We halted several times in the shadow of large rocks to let our cattle breathe, and gave them the juicy, pear-shaped fruit of the cactus, which grew here abundantly; and they eagerly

devoured it. Such a rest could not do us much good, and so we continually urged our horses on, till, after passing about sunset between tremendous crags, we found a broad path, which soon wound down the eastern slope, when, about a mile farther on, we saw a copse of low cypresses. With great delight we accepted their invitation, and followed the path which ran into a small glen, where we found good grass and splendid spring-water.

We allowed our cattle to graze till far into the night, when they lay down, and we brought them near our fire, and slept quietly till dawn.

The sun had scarce risen, when we left this spot, and hastened back to the road across the ridge. Our cattle walked quickly along the path in the cool, morning breeze; and at about nine o'clock, Guadalupe hills lay to the north-west, while the western mountains on the opposite side of the Puerco opened, and allowed us a view through a broad pass of the Río Grande and Paso del Norté. Though it was so grand up here, we longed to be down below on the banks of the Puerco, and resolved to seize the first opportunity of descending afforded us by a direct path. During the whole day, however, we only found indistinct traces where buffaloes had descended the western slopes, till at about four P.M. we found a very practicable path, which crossed ours from east to west, and which we went down. The path ran down from the spring; and we followed it for about half an hour, till about nightfall we reached a small, leafy coppice, in which we camped. Tiger and Owl were of opinion that the path led down to the valley, as it ran past the springs, and because a path corresponding with it had run down the eastern side of the mountains.

The next morning we ate our last meal at a very early breakfast; and Tiger saddled his horse to make certain

whither the path ran, and also to try and shoot a deer or an antelope, of which there were large numbers on these mountains. During this time we wished to let our cattle graze and recover, as they greatly needed rest; and, in the event of our being obliged to ride back to the ridge, we wished to halt here till the next day. The sun had just risen when Tiger left us. We lay in the shade of the closely growing elms and poplars, and were drinking coffee at noon, as Tiger had not yet returned, when we suddenly heard the footsteps of a horse beneath us, and, directly after, saw the piebald come round the precipice. Our surprise was great, however, on seeing that the horse's handsome white seemed dyed quite red on the neck and breast; and Tiger too, when he drew nearer, was quite bloody. I hurried towards him, and saw, to my terror, that he had serious wounds on his left shoulder, and that the blood covered his arm and the whole of his left side. I took his rifle, helped him off his horse, and went back with him into the shade of the elms, while Antonio looked after the piebald. Tiger now told us he had been riding about three miles down the stream through a small coppice, when suddenly an immense jaguar leapt at his horse's neck, but at the same instant he buried his hunting-knife between the beast's ribs. At this moment he slipped off his terrified, rearing horse; the jaguar buried its claws in his right shoulder, while he dealt it several stabs; and it then fell dead. The piebald bolted down the stream as fast as his legs would carry him over the stones, and Tiger believed that he should never see him again, when he noticed him on a bleak crag: he shouted to him from a distance, and the faithful creature at once hurried up to him. He then washed his own and the horse's wounds, and returned to us, suffering great pain. He had four wounds on his shoulder, close together, as if cut with a

knife, and which ran about four inches down his arm. The foremost was so deep, that I was obliged to sew it up. I bandaged him as well as I could, laid all the rags we possessed in a moist state on the wound, and made him moisten them pretty frequently in the neighboring stream. Then I examined the poor piebald, who had on his back four deep wounds from the jaguar's fangs, and several injuries on the neck from the claws: still none appeared dangerous; and, though the throat swelled considerably, constant washing soon produced an alleviation.

Owl now went up the hills in search of game, while I proceeded down the stream with Antonio and Königstein to fetch the jaguar's hide. We reached the scene of action, where the jaguar lay outstretched on the bank, and the ground was trampled by the horse's hoofs. The animal had five knife-stabs near the heart; and the earth and grass around were dyed with its blood, while we were able to follow the blood-stained track of Tiger and the piebald down the stream. My two comrades at once set to work removing the splendid skin, while I followed the path for the purpose of procuring meat.

I had gone some distance without getting within shot, though I frequently saw game; and the low position of the sun warned me to commence my return to camp. I was following a small affluent of the stream, which came down from the hills a little more to the south, in order not to return by the same road I had come, when I suddenly heard about half a mile off a roar that exactly resembled that of a lion. I ran in the direction whence the sound came, and soon saw, on the bank of the stream, two giant stags engaged in a most furious contest, and surrounded by a herd of does, and, farther on, some large stags on the watch. I ran up within forty yards of them unnoticed, while, with

their huge antlers intertwined, they butted each other, and frequently sank on their knees. I shot the largest, which fell; and its enemy at once buried its tines in the flanks of its overpowered foe, not suspecting that the same rifle which had slain its opponent still held a deadly bullet in readiness. I could easily have killed it, but preferred a fawn, which was standing no great distance off, and killed it. I now got up behind the rocks to reload, and the startled herd darted off to the mountains. I went up to the stag, which had two and twenty tines, and was very plump; after which I hurried to reach camp before it grew dark, and met Owl, who had shot nothing. As we had nothing left to eat, we at once started with Jack to fetch in the game, taking some firebrands of pine-wood as torches. The night was dark; but the torchlight illumined all the objects around the more distinctly in consequence. Antonio walked in front; I followed with Trusty; and Königstein, with Jack, formed the rear. We soon reached the stags, and loaded Jack with a large supply of meat, with which we arrived in camp about ten o'clock. Our hunger was great, as we had eaten nothing since morning; and we sat till a late hour round the fire, turning our spits.

It was scarce daylight when I took my weapons and went to pay another visit to the rutting stags, John accompanying me. We reached the spot where I had shot the stags, and heard thence the roars of the animals echoing through the valleys. They were standing, however, rather higher up the stream, as they probably remembered my last night's visit. We pressed through the tall ferns, from which the dew dripped upon us like rain, and reached a plateau that hung over a dizzy precipice. Here stood the game, and, nearest to us, an old stag, which had its proud antlers thrown back, its thick swollen neck outstretched, and was

roaring furiously. All around, the other stags responded from the hills ; and we listened for a long time to the concert of these jealous lovers ere we thought of hunting them. As it was the first giant stag John had had a chance of firing at, I readily granted him the first shot, and allowed him to stalk the stag. The majestic animal, hit by my comrade's deadly bullet, fell on its knee in the midst of a roar, raised its head once or twice, and then fell lifeless on the scanty grass that covered the rock. John could not master his delight, and ran up to the stag ; by doing which he put an end to our sport here for this morning, as all the deer flew at the sight of him. The stag had six and twenty tines, and a pair of colossal antlers, whose ends were like shovels. We broke it up, threw the paunch over the precipice, and hoisted John's white handkerchief near it, in order to keep beasts of prey aloof.

It was still very early : the first sunbeams were just illumining the highest points of the steep precipice on the opposite side of the abyss on which we were standing ; and the cool breeze was too refreshing for us to think of hurrying back to camp. We followed the plateau, therefore, from which the opposite one continually retired, until the gorge widened into a rocky glen, from which colossal masses of stone rose in wild confusion. Far down the valley, at the point where it trended to the east, round the opposite hillside, we distinctly noticed a path which ran along the base of the mountains, and was probably the continuation of the one on which we were camped. As we still heard numerous stags roaring, we advanced till we were able to look down into the valley on the east, and follow our path for a long distance through it. We stopped to gaze at the wondrous forms of the mountains. I took out my telescope, looked at the path, and saw, a long way off,

dark forms moving among the rocks, which I soon discovered to be a large party of horse Indians. No doubt but the path they were marching along was ours, and they would be in our camp in less than hour, while we had a good half-hour's walk to it. We therefore turned, and hurried at full speed to join our friends.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HOME AGAIN.

TIGER advised us to saddle at once, while he and Owl carefully removed every thing that could betray our recent presence here. All the logs were carried into the stream in a deer-hide; the horse excreta, and scraps of food, hidden in the neighboring bushes; and, after giving our camp the appearance as if its occupants had left it some days previously, we led our horses over the firm stones down to the stream where I had shot the stag on the previous evening, and then along it till we could survey our path from a distance of about two miles from camp. Here we led our cattle into a coppice where they were hidden from the Indians by the bushes and rocks. Ere long the latter marched up the path. Tiger recognized them as Apaches, who were probably on the road to the eastern trading-ports of the United States, as they had their squaws and children and large bales of hides with them. We let them pass in peace. We then rode down the stream to the path, and put our horses at a sharp amble in the direction from which the Indians had just arrived.

Our road was very fatiguing, and we were frequently obliged to dismount, and lead our horses down the steep slopes; at the same time the path was covered with small sharp stones, which rendered going down hill still more wearisome to the cattle; and it often ran over loose blocks of stone, where they ran a great risk of breaking their legs. Still all went well; and towards evening we rode out be-

tween the last hills into the fresh verdure of the Puerco Valley, and camped on the stream whose course we had been following for some days, and which here ran as a small river to the Puerco.

We marched thus without halting for about a week along the hills, during which the mountain-chains on the west of the Puerco constantly drew nearer to us, and contracted the valley. We had followed our course one whole morning without finding water, till about two o'clock, P.M., when the heat became unendurable, and we looked out ahead for some shadow in which we could rest for a few hours. At length we caught sight of a clump of trees, and, to our indescribable joy, we saw distinctly that they were poplars which retained their fresh foliage,—an infallible sign that there was water near; for such trees often stand in pools, and, when the water dries up, their leaves turn yellow and fall off. We urged our cattle on in order to reach the trees as speedily as possible; for now that we might expect shadow, and probably water, we felt the sun's heat doubly. On these plains, objects are seen so clearly and distinctly for incredible distances, that you often deceive yourself; and such was the case with these poplars: we constantly believed that we must reach them in a quarter of an hour, and yet hours passed ere we really arrived. We hastened into the thick shade of the old trees; and I can scarce describe the cheerful feeling that possessed us all on seeing close to them, instead of a pool of muddy slime, two ponds of the clearest, freshest spring-water, one of which the poplars overshadowed with their long branches. The cattle were quickly unloaded, and, rolling themselves on the grass, they dried their wet backs, while we, reclining on the turf, inhaled the cooler air. The pools, like the mountain-springs near my house, had no visible connection with any other

water, but, for all that, retained their freshness, though almost constantly exposed to the burning sun.

We lay without stirring, so as to avoid any movement which might have impeded our rapid cooling. Not a breath of air stirred, the easily agitated leaves of the poplars hung motionless from the long stalks, while over the water lay that quivering, dazzling glow, which announces the highest degree of heat.

We watered our horses once again, and then trotted on in order to cover a good bit of ground; for the nearer we got to our home, the greater grew our longing for it and all the friends whom we had left there.

We continued our journey for about a week, and crossed a number of small streams which ran into the Puerco, till one noon we reached another rivulet, on whose shady bank we resolved to rest. The moon had hitherto distinctly shown us the buffalo-paths; but here her rule was at an end, and only now and then did a ray fall through the lofty masses of foliage which now roofed us over. We stopped on a very trampled path, which we could not follow, however, through the forest; for, even if our cattle kept the road, the creepers hanging over it rendered our progress difficult. Our cattle were very thirsty; and, as we had no doubt of finding water in the forest depths, we resolved to try and reach it. We dismounted, gathered dry grass, out of which Owl and Tiger twisted torches, one of which we lit, and then pressed on, leading our horses. We had not gone more than one hundred yards into the forest, when Tiger cried that he was at the river; and shortly after we led our thirsty horses down the bank, and refreshed them in the cool stream: we filled our gourds, and returned by the same road to the prairie, where we fastened up our cattle in the grass, and lit our fire.

We stopped here till about three P.M., and then continued our journey southward. As the banks of the stream were very steep here, we were delayed a little till we had all our baggage across, but then rode for two hours without a halt through the glorious shade of the forest, in whose gloom only now and then a bright yellow patch was lit up by the inquisitive sunbeams.

The next morning we followed the stream to the river, and about noon reached the principal Indian path that led from these valleys over the San Saba Mountains, and greatly facilitated our passage over them. On the third morning, we looked down on the hills near our home, on which we camped the same evening. The next day we reached Turkey Creek at sunset, and would assuredly not have camped, but ridden home without resting, had not our cattle been so fatigued. It was very late ere we thought of lying down to rest, and even then the conversation was carried on for a long time. After the old fashion, the turkeys announced to us that day was breaking. On this occasion, however, we did not shoot any, but each breakfasted quickly, and got ready for going home. A little more attention was paid this day to our costume: although we could not make much of it with the greatest skill, still we looked altogether tidier when we left camp, and each galloped on to be the first. I was obliged to hint that we still had a long way to go, and ought not to begin with galloping. The journey to-day seemed very long to us, although our horses advanced sturdily, as if they, too, noticed that we were going home. At about ten o'clock we made a half-way halt, and let our cattle rest for a few hours, while we lit a fire at the same spot where we had made coffee at the beginning of our journey, and drank it again: at about two o'clock, however, we saddled and spread over the bag-

gage of the mules the finest jaguar-skins, above which the two splendid stags' heads were displayed.

We were still busy with our horses, when suddenly Jack kicked up behind, gave a few springs, and then trotted along the path that led to the Leone. He would not be deprived of the pleasure of being first; for, so soon as we approached him, he doubled his pace, and even galloped when it appeared necessary. All our cattle now plainly showed that they knew they were near home, and could not be held in. Long before sunset we passed through the wood on the Leone, and entered the prairie below the fort, where we fired all our shots. We were greeted from the fort in the same way; and its inhabitants ran out to meet us, and overwhelm us with congratulations. Every thing was as before, except that another good harvest had been got in; that horses, cattle, pigs, and dogs had multiplied; and that numerous new settlers had arrived both north and south.

John was impatient to get home, and left me no time to change my clothes, as I wished to accompany him. I therefore saddled Fancy, left Königstein to look after Czar and Trusty, and rode with my companion towards Mustang River. From a distance we could see that the Lasars had built a large, new house with glass windows and galleries, whose whitewashed walls glistened through the gloom. We had reloaded, and announced our return to our friends some distance off. Soon after we saw white handkerchiefs waving, light dresses hurrying out of the garden-gate, and old and young, black and white, hurried to meet us, and welcomed us with expressions of joy and congratulations. I had to apologize for my dress, and retire; but I was obliged to stay to supper, which meal we took under the veranda; and after it we sat in the garden before the house, where the

perfumes of splendid flowers surrounded us, which, illumined by the moonbeams, formed graceful groups around us.

It was about midnight when I reached the fort, where I found everybody up and also cheered by wine; for I had ordered Königstein, when I rode away, to give them a treat. I, however, soon sought my bedroom with Trusty, and slept, with open doors and windows, till the sun stood high in the heavens. I hastened down to the river; and, after a bath, the old trunks were opened, and the garb of olden times was taken out.

Some weeks passed ere I was quite at home again, all the works looked after, others to be undertaken arranged, and repairs and improvements carried out. I frequently came across the Lasars; visited, with the old gentleman, the new settlers in the neighborhood; consulted with him about making roads and bridges, and was appealed to by him in any important undertakings in his private affairs. Although we now felt no alarm about the Indians coming to the numerous new settlements, their friendly visits now grew wearisome and disagreeable. Every moment a new tribe arrived, of whom we had scarce heard, to make friendship with us, and receive presents. Something must be given them, else we ran a risk that they would take it out on our cattle, or fire the prairie when a violent wind was blowing, or take some other revenge which would do more injury than the value of the presents. They no longer ventured on open hostilities within range of our settlements: to such only the more distant squatters were exposed, who lived nearer to the desert.

Shortly after our return arrived a Mr. White from Virginia, with his wife, two sons of twelve and fourteen years of age, and two younger daughters. He applied to Lasar and myself to show him a good bit of land on which he

could settle. The people pleased us : they were friendly and honest, lived on good terms together, as we noticed on our frequent visits to their camp on the Leone, and were the right sort to defy such a mode of life. Lasar and I resolved to take them under our wing, and induced them to settle at our old camping-place on Turkey Creek ; for which purpose we set out early one morning with them, Lasar ordering twenty negroes to come with us, and prepare an abode for the new-comers. We built for them there, in a few days, a neat double block-house ; that is to say, two houses about twenty yards apart, over which, and the space between, one long roof was thrown. Then we surrounded the house with a palisade, in which they could lock their cattle at night ; and fitted for them a lot of wood, with which they could fence in a garden. Lasar gave them a handsome cow, and I gave them a breeding sow, some fowls, and maize to eat and to sow for the coming spring. White was one of those resolute, unswerving men, who, after struggling for a long time with misfortune in the civilized world, turn their attention to the western deserts, where they try to extort from fate what has been refused to them elsewhere. With his peculiar energy and restless execution of every thing he had once undertaken, he set to work in his new home, in order, as soon as possible, to lay the foundation of his own and his family's future prosperity : but, unfortunately, he was only able to see the foundation ; for the garden was hardly fenced in, and the maize-field taken in hand, ere he fell ill, and a violent fever carried him off in a few days. His eldest son, Charles, rode over to me to bring me the melancholy news, and tell me that his mother wished to speak to me. I rode across the next morning with Königstein and a negro. The widow was sitting inconsolably by the side of her dead husband, without any plan for the future ; and on my entrance

pointed, with sobs, and unable to utter a word, to the dead body. I at once ordered the negro to dig a grave, and buried the poor fellow ; after which I sat down by the widow's side, and tried to give her some consolation by offering her my assistance. I proposed to her to settle near me till her sons were old enough to look after their present farm ; but she was of opinion that they were able to do so already, although not strong enough to do the heavy field-work, such as clearing the land from bushes and trees, as well as felling and clearing the wood itself. If this could be done for her, she would not leave the spot, as her lads could plough, and use the pick, while both fired a rifle as well as any frontiersman ; and she too, if it came to the point, knew how to use her husband's fowling-piece. I made every possible objection to her plan of living here alone, but promised my help and Lasar's if she insisted on adhering to it.

The next morning I said good-by to the woman who was determined to stop here, and promised to send her help to prepare her garden and fence, and bring her a few trifles for her comfort. I got home at an early hour, and rode in the evening to Lasar's to tell him what had happened. The old gentleman at once declared that he would send John off the next morning with the requisite number of slaves to arrange every thing for the widow ; and all the members of the family vied with each other in displaying their sympathy by sending articles of clothing and stores of every description. In a week, every thing was in order at White's ; the garden was laid out, and a field of five acres prepared for planting with maize, beans, gourds, and potatoes. The best varieties of vegetables were sown in the garden, and seeds of all sorts given to the widow. The woman had, for the present, only to keep the garden in order, while the

sons procured game, which they could shoot, at times, from their own door; for all her other wants were amply supplied. Thus peace and contentment soon returned to this house, and the love of her children restored Mrs. White the activity and determination which the loss of her husband had palsied.

Shortly after peace had settled down again on this solitary abode, the widow was seated, as usual, in the cool passage with her daughters, while her second son, Ben, had gone to the spring to fetch water, and Charles had gone into the neighboring wood with his rifle. All at once the very sharp dogs which guarded the family made an unusual disturbance, and ran barking across the yard that surrounded the house. Mrs. White jumped up, and saw several Indians standing in front of the nearest wood, and then retire into it again directly after. She seized the horn, sounded it with all her might; then ran into the room, and took down her deceased husband's fowling-piece, that was loaded with slugs, with a resolution and courage such as has grown almost entirely strange to the feminine sex in civilization, and is only found on rare occasions on its outermost frontier on this continent. In a few minutes, Ben ran up and found his mother already behind the palisade, with the gun in her hand. "Quick, Ben, your rifle!" she cried to her twelve-year-old son; "but don't forget your bullet, boy;" and then blew the horn again. The dogs now came in again, and Mrs. White closed the hole in the fence through which they passed. All at once, a frightful yell was heard from the wood, and from its gloom sprang a swarm of some thirty red-skinned fiends, who dashed over the grass towards the house with an awful war-cry. "Don't fire, Ben, till I have loaded again!" Mrs. White cried, and then rapidly discharged both bar-

rels, sending some forty leaden pellets among the charging horde. The effect of the two shots, at hardly fifty yards' distance, was so tremendous, that the horde darted in all directions as if struck by lightning; and eight remained on the grass, while the others ran howling to the wood. "Fire, Ben!" Mrs. White cried to her son, who had thrust his rifle through the palisades, while she poured a handful of slugs down her gun, and placed two cotton wads upon them. Ben fired into the thickest of the fugitives; and one of them fell, with his feet in the air, while the yells of the others filled the air. "I have hit, mother," the boy said, as he poured fresh powder down the barrel. "Bravo, Ben! but where is Charles? He ought to have been here by this time, as he has not been gone long. Run into the house and have a look at Fanny and Bessie, but come back again directly." Thus Mrs. White called to her son while she was hurriedly making cotton wads, which she moistened with her lips, and threw back her long, raven hair which hung over her shoulders. "Mother, Charles is coming with Kitty!" Ben cried, as he ran out of the house, and hurried to the hind part of the fence to open the gate for their cow Kitty, which was trotting over the grass in front of Charles. The latter had heard the horn and the shots, and yells of the Indians, as he hurried home; had come across Kitty, and had driven her home.

Every thing was quiet, and the Indians did not make the slightest sound. Charles and his mother secured the two fence gates with logs of wood; and then the mother went to her young children, leaving her sons orders to call her if they saw any thing of the Indians. The day passed without the savages making a fresh attack on the settlement; but the greater, on that account, grew the widow's alarm, lest they should take advantage of the night to sati-

ate their vengeance. Towards evening, she bade her sons lie down and sleep, so that they could keep awake during the night while she kept guard in front of the house. The sun set, and darkness was lying over the country, when Mrs. White and her two sons took their places behind the palisade, and carefully surveyed the open prairie. It was about nine o'clock, when they saw the light of a fire coming through the wood, rapidly grow larger, and presently appear on its outermost edge. Again the fearful yell was raised with which the savages always accompany their attack, and the light moved from the forest over the grass. A dark object moved across the plain towards the house, and the light shone out on both sides of it. The object slowly drew nearer; and Mrs. White soon saw that it was a framework of bushes, behind which the Indians were concealed, and pushing it before them. This leafy wall had advanced within twenty yards, when Charley and Ben fired at it; and the groans of the wounded were distinctly heard amid the yells of the assailants. For all that, the wall moved slowly forward, and, in a few minutes, leaned against the corner of the palisade; after which, flames suddenly darted up, and set the fence on fire. The savages had brought a heap of dry wood with them behind the screen, piled it up against the palisade, and kindled it; after which they ran back about forty yards, and lay down flat in the grass.

The space behind the fence round the house was now so brilliantly illuminated, that Mrs. White feared lest the savages might fire arrows through the palisades at her boys; hence she retired with them into the house, and went up under the roof, whither she took her daughters too; while the dogs ran furiously along the palisade. Then she raised several of the shingles with which the roof was covered,

and placed others under them, so that she could survey the brilliantly lighted prairie, where she saw the Indians lying in the short grass. At the same instant, however, sparks fell down from the roof; for the savages had fired a number of burning arrows, which set fire to the dry shingle roof of cedar-wood. An inhuman yell of joy from the savages greeted the first flash of the flames, which soon ascended with a crackling sound. "Charles, the axe!" Mrs. White shrieked to her son, while she thrust her double-barrel through the roof, and fired at a group of savages lying together in the grass, who doubtless fancied themselves safe from the besieged. The unhurt men leaped up with a yell, and darted back to the wood; while the second barrel was fired after them, and again brought down several. Charles handed his mother the axe, with which she soon made a hole in the roof, and pulled out the blazing shingles; so that the fire was extinguished in a few moments. Then she ran, with axe and gun, down into the yard, reloaded, and checked the fire at the palisades, which, as there was no wind, spread very slowly, and was speedily put out. The corner of the palisade was certainly burnt down, and there was a large opening in it, while outside a large heap of burning coals remained from the fire. Mrs. White, with her sons' help, pulled the small cart which had conveyed their little property hither into the opening, and then filled up all the gaps with logs of firewood. The night was passed under arms; and, when dawn lit up the country, the heroic woman looked out of the roof at the battle-field in front of her fortress, without being able to see a trace of Indians. The savages had carried off the corpses of their comrades in the darkness, and had probably departed with them in the night, to let them rest with their fathers; for the Indians take the dead bodies of their friends with them,

and carry them hundreds of miles to the burial-place of the tribe.

Late on the following night, the barking of my dogs awoke me ; and when I shouted out of the fort, asking who was there, Charles White announced himself, and told me what had happened. I had his wearied horse looked after, gave him a bed, and early next morning rode with him to Lasar to consult with the latter what was to be done. This humane man soon formed a resolution, and told me he would let a faithful old negro, who was not of much use to him, live at Mrs. White's. He could sow a bit of land with cotton, the proceeds of which would be his own ; and the family would have a protector in him, as he was an excellent shot, and a fearless, determined man. Within an hour we were mounted, and rode past my fort in order to fetch Owl and Tiger. We arrived in the evening at White's, where we saw the damage done by the savages, and then heard the story from Mrs. White's own lips, on which occasion she praised Ben's bravery, who, during the narration, stood by his mother's side with her arm thrown round him. The woman was most grateful for our kindness and sympathy, and said that with the help of the old negro, Primus, she would withstand a whole Indian tribe. Primus remained there, and this settlement was really never again disquieted by Indians.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MESCALEROS.

SHORTLY after the occurrence on Turkey Creek, I was sitting, one afternoon, in the veranda before my house, and drinking coffee, when I saw, a long way down the prairie, a cloud of dust coming down the river. Curious as to who it could be, I went into the house and fetched my telescope. I saw three Indians on horseback, — a man in front, and two squaws following him. They rode very fast, in spite of the great heat, and soon came up the hill to the fort. I went out to them; and all three came through the palisade gate, and pulled up in front of my house. The warrior leapt from his horse, while the two girls remained seated on theirs. He told me in English that a tribe of Indians wished to make friendship with me, and the chief had sent to inquire whether he would be allowed to pay me a visit with his people. I asked him to what nation they belonged; which question appeared, as it seemed, to be disagreeable to him, and he passed it over in silence. He then said something to the two girls which I did not understand, and then told me they were Mescaleros, but not of those who made the attack on Mrs. White. The chief of the latter was no good friend of the white men; but the father of these two girls was a very good friend, and hence he wished to come and tell me so himself.

The sun had already set, and darkness was spreading over the landscape, when my princesses trotted out proudly

into the prairie, wrapped in their blankets, with an assurance that they would return early the next morning with the whole tribe. At an early hour, I had a very large kettle of coffee made and extra bread baked before the cattle were driven out to pasture; a fat ox was driven into the enclosure, the dogs were chained up, and I ordered my men to keep the fort closed, as the Indians whom I wished to enter it would be led through my house, which stood at the south-eastern angle, and had an entrance through the palisade.

At the appointed hour we saw the party of Indians coming down the river, and soon halt in front of my fence. I went out, received the chief with the usual ceremony, and saluted his two daughters, who, on this day only, wore snow-white, bran-new petticoats, painted in the brightest colors with very considerable taste. The chief was a man of about fifty years of age, about six feet high, with broad shoulders and arched chest, regular, handsome features, straight nose, sharp black eyes, lofty forehead, and—a rarity among the Indians—a heavy mustache twisted into points. He had a haughty, imposing mien, and something very determined in his appearance, which was, however, kindly and hearty, so that we fraternized in a few moments. I proposed to lead him and his daughters to my house: but he turned to his tribe, and said something I did not understand; upon which two men stepped out of the mob, and joined us. We reached the gallery in front of my house, to which I had had all my chairs carried, in order, if possible, to keep the interior clear for the curious guests. I made them sit down at table, and handed the chief the pipe I had myself lighted; he passed it to his neighbors, and so it went the round; while the two girls swung themselves in the rocking-chair, or the hammock

hung up in the gallery, and smoked cigars. After the calumet of peace had passed round, the chief informed me of the purpose of his visit, — to make peace with me, — and introduced the other two Indians to me as the Chief of Peace and the Sage in Council, in which the Mexican acted as interpreter.

We had finished dinner, and I told the chief that I now wished to give his men their dinner; on which he rose, and said that he had better be present, or else no order would be kept. We went out in front of the palisade, after I had locked my house-door, unseen by the two girls, and had the caldron of coffee, sweetened with honey and mixed with milk, brought out, as well as the bread, which last the chief distributed among the various families, telling them to use in coffee-drinking their own utensils, which consisted of shells, horns, and cocoa-nuts. There were above two hundred souls in camp, though among them all were only forty warriors.

I now showed the chief the fat ox which I had shut up in the cow's milking enclosure, remarking, at the same time, that I intended to give it to his people; and asked whether it should be shot now, to which he assented. Königstein brought me a rifle, and I shot the ox through the skull; after which some of the Indians skinned, and carried the joints to camp. Ere long some thirty fires were lighted, round which the Indians lay and roasted the meat, while constantly running to the coffee-caldron to fill their vessels.

We again took our seats in the veranda, and I ordered the coffee and cake, which my guests tremendously enjoyed; then I gave them all cigars to smoke, after which the chief told me that his people were well satisfied, were very good friends of mine, and would remain so.

Evening arrived: we supped, and, when the moon had

fully risen, went out to the Indian camp, as the chief wished to spend the night with his men, because the latter might be alarmed about him if he slept in the fort with me. We had hardly reached the first fire, when we heard a fearful row at the other end of the camp; and the chief ran with his two colleagues in the direction of it. I was anxious about what was going on there, and hastened after them, accompanied by the two Indian girls. Two young men had quarrelled, and were engaged in a violent dispute when we came up, while the voices of the chief and his colleagues were raised to a loud key. Suddenly, however, the two men rushed to different fires, seized their bows and arrows, flew about a hundred yards apart into the prairie, and in a few minutes disappeared from sight. The chief shouted after them; but no one pursued them. The Mexican was standing not far from us at the next fire, and I called him up to give me an explanation of the disturbance. Pahnawhay, however, explained to me, with a few very intelligible signs, that the two young men loved the same girl, and she had given her affection to both; upon which they quarrelled, and had run off to kill one another. The Mexican confirmed this statement; on which I asked why no one tried to prevent it; but I received the laughing reply, as if the thing were self-evident, that this was impossible.

In a very short time all became quiet again in camp, as if nothing extraordinary had happened; and, after I had sat for a while with the chief, I wished him good-night.

Day had hardly dawned when I opened my door, and stepped out into the gallery to greet the fresh morning. I had another caldron of coffee and a great quantity of maize bread carried to the camp; invited the chief and his two councillors of state and his daughters to breakfast; after

which he told me that our friendship was now eternally concluded, and that he would depart with an easy mind. I made him a number of trifling presents, such as blankets, tobacco, looking-glasses, vermilion, &c. ; gave the daughters several keepsakes as well ; and my guests quitted me, apparently remarkably well satisfied.

During the two days, Owl and Tiger had not shown themselves, as the Delawares, though not open enemies, are not on very friendly terms with the Mescaleros ; and so they went off hunting. Owl had received his wages long before, but still remained with us, as he seemed to enjoy himself, in which our cooking played a great part ; but he now came one morning to me, and said the time had arrived when he promised to join his family, and so he must leave us, as he did not wish to render his friends alarmed about his safety. He rode to Lasar's, and took his leave, when he received handsome presents. I, too, gave him numerous trifles for his fidelity and devotedness ; and he went off, accompanied by Tiger, promising to pay me a visit very shortly.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SILVER MINE.

IT was now the busiest time in the fields. The storms had blown down a great number of huge dried trunks standing in the fields, which had to be cut up, and rolled away ; which business was one of our hardest jobs. Moreover, I had the field enlarged ; fenced in a very large extent of land, part prairie, part forest, where I could turn my mares and colts out ; and, on rainy days, had wood felled to let it dry, and afterwards employ it for building-purposes. Axe and plough were equally active on the Mustang, and on many smaller streams in the vicinity, where civilization had set its foot. Thus whole patches of forest disappeared before man's busy hand, and the soil was robbed of its natural protection : the roots were turned up to be burnt or rot, and the earth was thus forced to receive and generate seeds foreign to it. The prairies, which, a few years back, had only been traversed by the desert animals, were now inhabited by herds of tame domestic creatures attached to a home ; and the traveller's ear in these regions was no longer startled by hearing the unexpected sound of a cattle bell.

But Nature will not allow laws to be prescribed to her without taking vengeance, or have changes made in her domestic arrangements forcibly by human hands. With the felling of forests, and the turning-up of the soil, she sends diseases which check her insulter in the work he has begun, and punish him for his audacious inroads. For my

part, I had as yet been spared, while all my companions had been ill.

It was a very hot day when I rode to the nearest town, as usual, only provided with a blanket, and, during the nights, lay by my fire in the open air, with it pulled over me. I remained several days in town, and, during the period, felt a never before known ailing, and a reduction of my strength. My business being ended, I rode off about noon to reach the next house, whose inhabitants were friends of mine. I arrived there about an hour before sundown, but found the family in a great state of disorder, as the head of it had just died of a violent attack of fever. Although I felt very unwell, I did not like to be troublesome to the family, and rode on after a short halt. My illness increased with every quarter of an hour: at one moment I shook with cold, at another I felt as if I were being burnt alive, and my head ached as if it would burst. I rode on, although I could hardly sit my horse, and at last tottered in the saddle, quite incapable of thinking: at the same time, an indescribable burning thirst tortured me, and my tongue seemed to cleave to my roof; while I had a singing in my ears, as if there were thousands of grasshoppers inside my head.

It was nearly dark when I reached the middle of a very wide plain, that was covered with fine, very white sand, and in which the horse, at every step, sank above the hocks. I could no longer remain in the saddle; dismounted, sat down on the red-hot sand, fell back, and became perfectly unconscious: presently I fell into a profound sleep, from which I did not wake till the next morning. I looked around in surprise, and it was some time ere I could remember what had brought me here. I jumped up, and Trusty, the faithful, leapt barking around me; but I did not see Czar. My feet would hardly carry me, and my head was

as heavy as if I had lead inside it. I looked for my horse's track, dragged myself along it, and, to my great consolation, saw the faithful creature in a hollow, nibbling some cactuses, and saddled and bridled as I had left him on the previous evening. I got on to his back with difficulty, and turned him in the direction of home. Thirst now began to grow unendurable. The sun burst forth, and poured its burning beams upon me with such fury, that I fancied I should never be able to reach a pool, about five and twenty miles distant, which contained the only water in the neighborhood. This pond was at last the only thought of which I was capable: at the same time my head threatened to burst, and the fever shook me mercilessly. My horse walked along the familiar path through the heat, and bore me, when the sun was vertical, down a sand-hill to the edge of the pond, where I sank powerless, and crawled to the water in order to moisten my burning lips. But it was no water, but a thick, dark-red mud, which was nearly boiling, and in which buffaloes had been wallowing very shortly before. No matter. I lay with my mouth over the thick fluid, and swallowed as much of it as I could. It was really a comfort, for the dryness of my throat was removed; but my helplessness was so great, that I could not resolve to leave the spot, though I lay exposed to the burning sun on the hot sand, and was only a short distance from shady trees.

I lay as I was, and had but one thought, — that the sun must kill me here; but still I could not muster up the courage to go away. At length, towards evening, when the sun was lower, the terrible fever gave way a little. I crept slowly into the shade, and soon was asleep under the tree. It was quite dark when I awoke, and, though very faint, my head was clearer. I went up to Czar, who had been graz-

ing by my side all this time, got into the saddle, and continued my journey, on which the pleasant light of the new moon lit me, and the cool evening breeze refreshed me. I rode till ten o'clock, when I reached the Lynx Spring, which I had christened after one of those animals that I had found dead here many years ago, and whose water was the best for miles around. I was quickly off Czar's back among the roots of the magnolia, beneath which the spring bubbled up; and I drank as if I should never be satisfied. I had a biscuit and a paper of coarse sugar about me. This was my supper; and I washed it down with the pure fluid. I felt much refreshed, drew many a deep breath in the powerful breeze, and gazed at the patches of light around me which were thrown by the moon through the dense foliage, and through the violent motion of the leaves trembled, and continually altered their shape. It was a very dangerous spot, as this water was the only spring for miles round, and wandering Indians often select it as their destination after travelling for a day through the desolate, waterless sand-plains; but I would not have ridden away, even if I had been compelled to defend myself against a whole tribe. I had a few good cigars about me, and lit one, which I smoked, leaning against a tree, and, as I fancied, inhaling fresh strength at every breath.

It was about midnight, when I set out to reach a camping-place at which I should not be so threatened as at the present one; and, after filling my gourd with water, I rode away, faintly lighted by the waning moon. I knew the road thoroughly, and the outline of the trees was sufficient to enable me to keep my course. I could, if my horse went at any pace, reach, within an hour, a well-known camping-place at which I had passed many a night, and which lay but a little way off my route. It certainly had no water,

but excellent grass for my horse ; and hence various sorts of game could generally be found there. The main point was that it lay some distance from the principal Indian path, and was tolerably concealed, so that a fire could be lighted there without any great risk of being seen from a distance. It soon became very dark, after the moon had sunk behind the hills in front of me ; and I was obliged to yield the reins to Czar, and leave it to him to find the road, while I sent Trusty on a little way ahead to make certain there was no danger. Every now and then, however, I saw by familiar clumps of trees or knolls that I was still on the right track ; and I approached my destination rather quickly, considering the circumstances. The country through which I rode consisted more or less of sandy hills, covered with isolated black oaks without any scrub, under which grew a very tall grass, disliked by cattle, which had now entirely decayed. So far as I could judge in the darkness, I was no longer any great distance from my camping-place ; for I saw in a hollow, on my left, a wood running along my route, and which I knew to be a swampy patch, in which all the rain-water of the neighborhood collected. On my saddle hung several new tin cups, and a coffee-pot of the same material, which rattled at every movement of my horse, and thus produced a ringing sound which could be heard for some distance. I dismounted, and twined dry grass between them to keep them quiet.

I had just remounted my horse, and was riding up a hill, when suddenly bright flames sprang up not far behind the latter, and illumined the whole country around. In terror I stopped my horse, and saw, in a few minutes, that not only on the right of the hill the flames rose to the branches of the surrounding oaks, but that the fire was spreading with extraordinary fury on my right and in my rear.

There was only one opening in this circle of fire, on my right, near the swamp. I turned Czar round, and galloped through the low oaks and tall grass towards the valley, in which I was obliged to trust to the safe foothold of my horse, as I could not see a sign of a path. The wind luckily was not very violent, or else I could not have escaped: as it was, I reached the wood before the fire darted down into the bottom behind me. I stood here on moist ground, between green bushes which the flames could not reach, and saw that they had fired the oaks, and converted each of them into a fiery pyramid. The whole country ahead of me was now a mass of fire, whose tongues rose over fifty feet, in which the flames of the trees could be recognized by their dark-red hue, while above them the ruddy clouds of smoke rose to the sky. Ere long, however, the burning oaks stood alone like pillars of fire on the denuded knolls, and the sparks flew out of them with a terrible roaring and crackling. I stood before this fire till day broke and showed me the black skeletons of the still burning trees, and the dark smoke-clouds rising above them. Ere long, only small flames crept round the bare trunks. I mounted my horse to get away from this scene of conflagration, and rode up the wood, being obliged frequently to draw nearer to the burning trees to escape the swampy ground, until at last I was compelled to pass through the fire, owing to the impassable nature of the ground. The smoke, the black ash, and the heat were almost unendurable, and frequently heavy branches fell close to me. I rode as sharply as I could, and in an hour reached an open burnt clearing, where I was once more able to draw fresh breath. The fire had undoubtedly been lit simultaneously at different points for the purpose of burning me by the Indians: but none of them had ventured on to the prairie leading down

to the bottom ; as I could see over it, and, if a fire had been lit there, I could have detected the culprits.

I hurried along in the refreshing morning breeze, and arrived about noon at a stream, on whose bank I turned into the adjoining wood, and granted my horse and myself a rest. On the road I had shot a turkey, which pacified my hunger and Trusty's ; and I strengthened myself by a sound sleep, from which I did not awake till evening. During the whole day I had felt tolerably well, but looked with terror for the next, as I must expect that my fever would return every second day : so I rode, till a rather late hour, in order to reach a camp where I was tolerably certain I could pass the day without disturbance. Before I rode off, I dug up some roots of the tulip-tree, and chewed them, swallowing the juice, till I reached camp. These roots are one of the best remedies against fever which Nature offers in these regions. I slept till the sun disturbed me, and woke with aching head and weary limbs. I took Czar to graze, and then lay down on my blankets, after placing my gourd full of fresh water by my side. The attack of fever was not very violent : about two, P.M., I was able to continue my journey, and slept that night on an affluent of the Mustang. The next morning, I mounted at an early hour, in order to reach the fort as soon as possible ; and made Czar step out, as I felt very well.

About ten o'clock, I rode through a prairie which ran down to the Mustang, which here, an insignificant stream, flowed between high banks over loose pebbles, and was only deep at isolated spots. The prairie was covered with clumps of tall cactuses and sunflowers ; and I was riding between some of them, when a large stag got up before me, and stopped a little way ahead. I turned Czar half round, and shot the stag, which fell, but got up again, and ran off





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to the Mustang. As I saw that it was very sick, I sent Trusty after it, who soon disappeared with it in a thicket; and I had scarcely reloaded, when I heard his hoarse bark, and recognized by its tone that he was occupied with something else than the stag. I went up the wood as fast as Czar could carry me, leapt off, and ran through the bushes to the bank where I heard Trusty's voice. A mortal terror assailed me on seeing Trusty in shallow water near a deep spot, with his left hind-leg in the jaw of an alligator, whose skull he was smashing with his teeth, though this did not make it open its clinched teeth. I sprang at one bound into the river, in order to prevent the horrible brute from reaching deep water, to which it was retreating, and was only a few feet from it. I sprang on the beast's back, held it between my knees tightly, and lifted it into the shallow water, while it lashed its tail madly. I now pulled out a revolver, held it against the hinge of the jawbone, and fired one bullet after the other, till the bones were splintered, and the lower jaw fell off, liberating Trusty from his arrest. I examined him, and found that his leg-bone was not injured, though the flesh had suffered severely: at the same time he was losing much blood, and appeared to be enduring great pain. The stag lay close to the scene of contest; so I drew it ashore, and cut off the haunches: then I fetched Czar, bound one of them on either side of the saddle, packed a lot of bushes on the lot, and spread my blanket over them, on which I raised Trusty, after I had bound up his wounds as well as I could with wet pocket-handkerchiefs. I reached home in the afternoon, and at once made a decoction of the roots of the tulip and pomegranate and willow bark in order to check the fever, which it soon effected, combined with a strict regimen.

Tiger returned, after accompanying his friend to the Pu-

erco River, whence the latter travelled on alone to Santa Fé, at which place he had promised to meet his friends about this time. My young Indian friend now complained very often that I allowed him to ride out hunting alone, which was most disagreeable to him, as I did not permit him to take Trusty, who was of such great value in the bear-hunts, which are principally carried on at this season. I had certainly placed Leo, an excellent dog, at his service ; but he was only half the value of Trusty. One evening, Tiger returned from hunting, and told me that he knew where a very large bear was sleeping, but it would be difficult to get at it, as it was living in an old cypress that grew in the middle of the river, and was too large to fell. He described the spot to me, and I at once recognized the tree. We talked about the matter at supper, and resolved to make an attempt to get hold of the sleeper on the next day.

On the following morning we put our weapons, axes, and dinner in the canoe, and floated down the river in it. It was carried along by the current like a dart, so that we were obliged to steer very carefully between the numerous rocks. In an hour we stopped at the cypress, which was nearly six feet in diameter. We cut down some saplings on the bank, conveyed them to one side of the tree, and fastened them together so as to form a raft on which we could stand ; we then placed the canoe on the other side of the tree, and set to work with our axes felling it. In addition to Tiger and myself, Königstein and Antonio had come, so that one of us was always able to rest. About noon we had got some distance through the tree ; and as we had heard nothing of the bear, we began greatly to doubt whether it was in it : but Tiger insisted, in spite of our laughter and chaff, that it was sleeping there. We dined, drank the health of the occupant of the tree, and then set

to work again. In a few hours, the supports of the tree became so weak, that it was time to take precautions lest it should fall on us. We had hewn it on the side of the raft, towards which it naturally hung ; and we now all proceeded to our canoe, and held ourselves in readiness to push off at any moment. We gave the tree a few more cuts, and ere long we heard the first sound of cracking in its wood. We were certain that it could only fall over the raft ; and the only danger was that it might slip backwards from the stump, in which case we might easily be sunk. A couple more blows, and the lofty crown of the cypress bent more over the raft ; one more stroke, and it groaned and cracked at its base : we pushed off, and with a frightful crash it fell into the river, and splashed up the water so high that we were completely wet through, while the splinters and broken branches flew in all directions. We involuntarily held our heads down into the boat, which was raised a great height by the waves ; but after the first oscillation we all burst into a hearty laugh, and mockingly asked Tiger, "Where is our bear?" At the same moment, however, the bear leapt out of the middle of the splinters covering the surface of the river ; and while the water poured down, and prevented it from seeing, it laid its huge fore-paws on the floating pieces of wood, and sought a support, by means of which it could lift itself out of the disagreeable element. "The bear !" everybody shouted ; and we seized our rifles, and fired at it. At the moment when it reached the stern of our boat, and was trying to get into it by means of its paws, Königstein ran at the brute with his sharp axe, and buried it deep in the skull of the enormous animal, and then drove into its carcass the bent iron point of the boat-hook to prevent it from sinking. We pulled quickly ashore, where we hauled in our quarry with lassos.

Antonio ran back to the fort, and fetched our cart with two mules, with which he joined us before sunset. With the help of the animals, we pulled first the bear and then the canoe on land; rolled the former into the cart; then raised the canoe on the back of it, where we secured it; and so drove back to the fort, with the stern of our boat trailing along the grass. The bear gave us a large quantity of splendid fat, and its smoked flesh long supplied our table.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PURSUIT.

LASAR and I were occupied for several weeks on the settlement of Messrs. Clifton and MacDonnell and a Mr. Wilson. The latter had arrived from Georgia, with a considerable fortune and numerous negroes ; and the three young men settled together on Turkey Creek, in the neighborhood of Widow White. We helped them by word and deed ; and, in a short time, a very large lot of ground was cleared and sown with maize, although it was late in the year for it, and a large garden laid out, and the necessary buildings erected at a spot where, very recently, an axe had never been laid against a tree, or a plough had turned a furrow in the earth. The three young men set eagerly about the heavy work which such a new settlement demands, and were busy the whole day in the garden or the field, or else in felling wood. While doing so, they often forgot that they and not we were now living on the outermost Indian frontier, and constantly went from home unarmed. They went into the woods with an axe to fell trees, or rode without any weapons into the prairie to drive home their milch kine or fetch their draught oxen. Lasar and I had frequently blamed them for this negligence, but it was of no use ; and often, when we visited them, one or the other was away from home unarmed. While we, during the years that we had no neighbors, when working in the field, chained up our dogs round it, in order to be informed of the approach

of stalking Indians, and carried our rifles either on the plough or on our backs, they ploughed and worked for days without a dog or any other weapon but their hands. Their dwelling stood on the south bank of the river, where it joined the prairie; but they had their field on the northern side, in a wood which extended for a considerable distance.

At an early hour one morning, they all three crossed the river with a few negroes, in order to thin the growing maize crop; which operation is generally performed in the morning, as you are obliged to stoop constantly, which is very fatiguing in the hot sun. All three took their weapons into the field, and rested them against the fence, as they thought it too much trouble to carry them on their backs. They followed the rows of maize, one behind the other, from one end of the field to the other, and were again nearing the spot where they had placed their rifles, when suddenly some fifty Indians dashed over the fence with a loud war-yell, and attacked them. They could not think of flight, as the Indians surrounded them before they could recover from their first terror. Resistance was equally impossible, as they were quite unarmed; and hence the sole chance of escape lay in the mercy of the barbarians to whom they surrendered. The two negroes were accidentally at the other end of the field, and, at the first glimpse of the Indians, leapt over the fence into the woods to save themselves by hiding in its recesses. On looking round, they saw that each of the three young men was surrounded by a party of Indians busied in tying his arms behind his back. They ran through the wood to the river, swam across it, and, on reaching the houses, leapt with the other negroes on horses and mules, fled with the utmost speed towards the south, across the prairie, and reached my fort before sunset, horrified, and half frightened to death.

The terrible news aroused all my people. I at once sent a negro to Lasar's to tell him of what had happened, and, at the same time, beg him to join me as speedily as possible, in order to pursue the Indians, and, if possible, save the prisoners, during which time we made our preparations for immediate departure. I had provisions got ready and packed on a mule, which, this time, was not faithful Jack, as he had been galled by a badly fastened saddle: after this, a stock of ammunition was laid in, and we sat down to supper, which meal we had hardly finished when our friends from Mustang Creek, eight in number, galloped over the prairie, led by old Lasar himself, who was fire and flame, and vowed revenge like the youngest of us. Tiger, Antonio, Königstein, and one of the colonists of the name of Lambert, accompanied me; and we were soon urging our horses at full speed through the gloomy forest.

Tiger led our party, who trotted on as long as the moonlight lasted, but then fell into a walk, and, towards morning, reached the deserted blockhouses of the prisoners. We expected that the Indians would have burnt them down, but found them uninjured, which proved to us in what haste they must have departed with their quarry. We rode through the river into the wood, and found the spot where the savages had lifted their prisoners over the fence, and led them to its northern end. Here we found the traces of numerous horses galloping in the direction of the northern mountains. Tiger examined all the signs very carefully, and, after we had followed the trail for about an hour, dismounted, and sought about in the grass. Ere long he stretched out his arms, and parted fingers to the north and north-west, and told me that the fellows we were pursuing had divided here, and were pursuing different routes; which fact I was also able to recognize after a slight inves-

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tigation. I asked Tiger what we were to do ; but he laughed, and, joining his hands together, and pointing to the north, he stated that the Indians would come together again on the other side of the mountains in two days.

We now followed a trail which ran along a deeply trodden buffalo-path, and reached, before sunset, a spot in a valley covered with isolated rocks, trees, and bushes, which was bordered on both sides by steep hills. Here Tiger suddenly stopped, and leapt from his horse. I rode up to him ; and he showed me on the bare rocks that several horses had left the track, and turned off to the left down the glen. He showed me several pebbles which had been turned over by the horses, and on the rocks the graze of their hoofs, as well as here and there a trampled leaf or a broken blade of grass. He followed this trail carefully, and requested me to follow him, while making a sign to the others to remain on the path. A few thousand yards farther on, the track wound between large masses of stone, till we reached a clearing, on the other side of which we found signs of an extinguished fire near a spring. Tiger picked up a blackened bit of wood, and showed me by rubbing it with his finger that the wood was still wet, and hence, as it lay in the open sunshine, must have gone out shortly before. He now begged me to call up our comrades, so that we might rest ourselves and our tired horses here for a little while. I rode up to them ; and, when we returned to Tiger, he showed us, behind the spring, the shambles where one of the unhappy prisoners had ended his life. On a large flat stone, we saw a quantity of curdled, half-dry blood, and behind it lay the entrails of a man. Round the stone we found marks of boot-heels, which had probably belonged to the murdered man, and had been put on by one of the savages. Our fury against

them was terrible, and we would gladly have pursued them without resting, had our horses been able to carry us ; but they were too tired, and greatly required a rest.

We supped, and slept till near day, and by dawn we were following the trail again, along the path which we had quitted on the previous evening. Without halting longer than was necessary, we rode hard all day through the most impassable regions of the San Saba Mountains, and reached in the evening the prairies on their north side. We were still on the same trail, which had been made by five or six horses, and unsaddled when the sun had long disappeared behind the hill ; and Tiger was unable to follow the trail. We had ridden very sharply, so that our horses would hardly touch the good fodder here offered them ; and we had no sooner watered them in an adjacent stream than they lay down in the grass with a long breath, and fell asleep. We did not tie them up, so that they might graze directly they awoke, but kept up a good fire the whole night, and posted a sentinel.

At daybreak we were *en route* again, and hurrying after Tiger, who led us along the foot of the mountains. About noon, we rode through one the streams that flow into the Colorado, and found in the wood on its bank a deserted camp, from which the fugitives could not be gone long, as the bushes and weeds trampled by the horses were not dry yet. We merely watered our horses, and then urged them on ; for Tiger believed that we must catch up the Indians that same evening, as their horses were tired, and did not raise their feet high from the ground. Evening arrived : and, in the distance, another forest rose out of the prairie, which we reached with night ; but our foe had gone farther on, and we were compelled to halt again, as we could not follow their trail. Our guide consoled us with the morrow,

and said their horses could not last out any longer. We rode the whole day, however, without seeing any thing of the Indians, save the track of their horses. About sunset we rode into another forest, in which we hoped to find running water : we soon halted on its bank, and noticed, on the other side, the last camping-place of the Indians ; for several of their fires were still burning, and Tiger said that they now supposed themselves out of danger, and would not ride so fast. We crossed the stream, in order to occupy the deserted camp ; but had scarce reached it, when Tiger called to me, and pointed to a young tree with a smooth shining bark, the lower part of which was dyed with blood. He told me that one of the white men had been murdered here : the Indians had tied him up to the tree, and fired arrows at him ; and the bark displayed numerous marks of their points. At the height of a man the tree was sprinkled with blood ; and over it we found a deep cut, which appeared to have been made by a tomahawk. The Indians seemed to have come together again here ; for a number of fires had been lighted, and the trampled ground indicated a large troop of horses. We all insisted on riding on at once ; but Tiger reminded us that it was impossible to follow the trail, and by over-riding it we might easily lose much time, and give the cannibals a chance of escape.

Our impatience had attained the highest pitch : all were ready to start, but it was still too dark : we stood by our grazing cattle, and counted the minutes till dawn appeared, and allowed us to see the track of our enemies once more. Then we hastened on, and joyfully greeted every thicket in front of us, as we hoped to find the cannibals in it, and be able to take vengeance on them for our friends. Our hopes were frequently disappointed ; and the sun was approaching the western hills when we still urged on our awfully



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tired horses, following the trail of the Indian horses, which could not possibly be far from us, as their excreta on the path plainly indicated. Once again a wood rose before us on the prairie, but it was still so distant that we could not hope to reach it before dark. Tiger told me that we must either ride very sharply, so as to reach the wood by daylight, or camp on this side, and approach the wood at dawn; as we should get the worst of it if we came upon the savages in the darkness. We resolved on the former course, and collected the last strength of our animals. Spurring and flogging, we went on at a trot or a gallop, as if certain of reaching our destination to-day. One of our friends might possibly be saved by a few minutes' sharp riding, and so we paid no heed to the fatigue and pace of our horses. We rapidly approached the wood; but so did the sun the hills, which soon spread their lengthened shadow over the plain. The country before us became more uneven, and covered with large blocks of stones; and here and there rose an isolated clump of trees and bushes, while the forest appeared to be half an hour's ride distant. The darker it grew, the sharper we rode; and we dashed at a gallop between the rocks towards a patch of young oaks, with Tiger some distance ahead of us. While galloping round some rocks, I saw him suddenly turn his piebald towards us, and halt in the clump of trees, which we reached in a few minutes; and Tiger informed us that the savages were sleeping no great distance ahead, on the barren bank of a river.

Our excitement was frightful: trembling with eagerness, we fastened our steaming horses to the long branches of the young oaks, thrust our holster pistols in our belts, and advanced, leaving Antonio with the horses, silently and noiselessly after Tiger, when it had been arranged that I should

give the signal for a general attack by firing first. The moon was high, but lighted us poorly; the daylight, however, had not quite faded away, when we emerged from the rocks, and reached a small knoll, over which we saw almost invisible columns of smoke rising at various points. We spread out here in a long line, and crept up the hill, covered by some isolated rocks. When we reached the top, we saw the savages about thirty yards from us, collected round several fires. A deadly silence brooded over the slightly illumined landscape, which was only broken by the rustling of the rapid stream, on whose banks the Indians were encamped. The glow of the fires cast a dark-red reflection over the brown bodies of the reclining savages sufficient to enable us to see them more distinctly, while the light of the moon illumined the sights on our rifles.

All our barrels were pointed at the cannibals; and we could hear our hearts beating, while they did not suspect the approaching vengeance, and were most of them asleep. The wide chest of one of the ruffians was lit up by the fire right in front of me, while he was gazing into the ashes with his head resting on his right arm. The sight of my rifle was pointed at his heart, when I pulled trigger. At the same moment, the rifles of all my comrades cracked, and directly after we fired our second barrels among the rising Indians, who for a moment raised their war-yell, but then fled in great confusion, and dashed into the river, beneath the fire of our revolvers and pistols. In this faintly lighted scene of fury and terror, the long red and white striped silk handkerchief on Tiger's head waved, the broad blade of his heavy knife glistened in his right hand, his shrill voice filled the ears of the cannibals with the war-cry of the Delawares; and, immediately after the first shot, he flew, worthy of his name, among them, and spread death

among their ranks. Trusty, too, forgot his usual obedience, and pinned one of the savages by the throat, who had fired an arrow at him: he killed the Indian in a few minutes, and then dragged him about in the grass, satiating his fury. In a short time the battle-field was deserted by the enemy, with the exception of two and twenty killed and wounded they left on it, the latter of whom Tiger soon sent to join the former with his tomahawk. His war axe flew from skull to skull, and with every blow drove a soul out of its earthly tenement; after which he raised the hair of several whom he had killed in action.

The fight was hardly over, when a familiar voice called several of our names, especially Lasar's, mine, and Tiger's. It came from a little way off the camp, and reached us but faintly. We ran in the direction, and, to our joyful surprise, found MacDonnell bound hand and foot, lying on the grass behind a rock. His bonds were quickly cut; but he was unable to get up. We bore him to the nearest fire, blew it into a bright flame, and now looked at the death-like face of our poor friend, who, since his captivity, had endured death in a thousand shapes, and envied his two comrades their release from torture. He was so fatigued that he was unable to sit up. The joy at our appearance, and the fear lest we might go away again without finding him, had given him the strength to raise his voice; but now a greater faintness naturally set in, and he could scarce make signs to us to give him water. The fresh draught was handed him; then we laid him on a bed made of buffalo-skin, and left him to sleep, which, with the consciousness that he was saved, and among friends, did him more good than any thing else we could have offered him. The large fire lit up the plain around us, and displayed the victims we had sacrificed to the blood of our friends: farther on, it shone on the

great number of utterly exhausted Indian horses, most of which were lying fastened to lassos among the large stones in the grass. Although we did not apprehend any attack from the fugitive savages, many of whom had doubtless killed themselves by leaping off the high banks into the river, which dashed over rocks, and who, too, possessed no weapons that could be dangerous to us, we still posted sentries on both sides of the camp, and lit large fires in order to be able to watch the horses, as it was very probable that the Indians would attempt to recover them towards morning, after the moon had gone down. Our own horses we tied up in the grass close to camp, and then lay down by turns to rest as far as our state of excitement permitted it.

Morning dawned without our having been disturbed ; and, with the growing light, we began to survey the field of battle, and investigate the details of the events of last evening. The savages were a tribe of Mescaleros ; and, as we afterwards learned, the same who had made the attack on Mrs. White a few months before. Among the dead was their chief, who had been killed by the first shot fired, which was the principal reason why the assailed did not offer a greater resistance ; for they only discharged a few arrows, one of which hit Trusty, while another passed through Königstein's thigh. The weapons lay scattered about the battle-field. On the lofty bank were distinct signs where the fugitives had leapt off it ; but we found below no signs of them on the rocks jutting out of the river, as they had apparently fallen into the deep water between them. For all that, there was no doubt but that many had not reached the opposite bank alive ; for the stream was too rapid for a man to swim across it.

Our friend MacDonnell still lay motionless asleep, and

we did not disturb him. It was bright daylight when John Lasar summoned us to the fires of the savages, where we found the roasted and partially-gnawn bones of one of the murdered men, while Königstein discovered other remains of the dead bodies behind a rock. At about ten o'clock, MacDonnell woke, and felt greatly strengthened. We gave him food and a cup of wine to drink ; but he was very weak, and terribly excited, so that we prohibited him from talking about his own sufferings or those of his own comrades. About noon, we prepared to start and carry off the horses, of which we had captured forty-six, among them being several first-rate animals. Tiger at once sought out the leader of the troop, — an old mare, whose head and tail were hung with all sorts of ornaments ; and so soon as he led it away, all the others would follow it. He bound the mare to a tree, let loose the other horses, and wound the lassos round their necks, upon which they all collected round the old mare. We then saddled our horses ; selected the best saddle of the savages, a very handsome Mexican one, for MacDonnell ; put it on one of the captured horses which appeared good-tempered and safe, and covered it with a buffalo-hide, a large quantity of which we also found ; then we lifted our suffering friend on the horse. Tiger marched ahead of us, leading the mare behind us by a lasso, and followed by all the Indian horses, while we rode behind, and drove on the laggards. Thus we rode slowly to the south, and camped at sunset in a narrow strip of wood on a stream, where we found good pasture for the numerous horses. We merely fastened up the leading mare and our own cattle near the fire.

During the night we posted four sentries, and lit up the Indian horses with large fires. It passed without disturbance, and the next morning we continued our progress to

the south. We now made but short marches, as our own horses were very tired; but the captured ones were so exhausted that we could hardly drive them on with long sticks. We, on several occasions, unsaddled at noon, because we found good pasturage on water, and rested till the next morning, so that we might not have to spend the night at a worse spot.

One evening we found ourselves in the middle of an open prairie, on which only isolated mosquito-trees could be seen, and camped at a spot where there were several ponds, and an old fallen mosquito-tree lay, which, judging from the fire-marks, had offered burning materials to earlier travellers across this plain. The nearest woods to the south lay on the remotest horizon on the San Saba Mountains, and we did not calculate on reaching them till the next day. We lay in a hollow of the prairie, between two small elevations, and fastened our riding-horses and the leading mare to lassos driven into the ground, while the captured horses grazed on the bottom. The evening was splendid; and, as Mac was all right again, we were in the best spirits. After supper, the conversation turned on the captured horses; and we resolved to throw dice for them. The mare was allotted to me without throwing, as I gave up my chance of all the rest. Ere long, all the horses had owners. Antonio and Lambert resolved to try theirs the next morning, as they were not very well mounted; and everybody praised the good qualities of his horse, and expounded how the animals must be treated and ridden to make first-raters of them. Thus the night arrived, during which we again posted sentries on the nearest mounds; but it passed without any alarm. Day dawned: we blew up our fire, and got breakfast ready, while the horses were grazing around us. The sun rose while we were lying

carelessly on our buffalo-robes round the fire and drinking coffee ; when suddenly a fearful yell reached our ears over the next height, and a band of thirty horse Indians thundered down the hillside towards us, waving in one hand their buffalo-robes over their heads, shaking in the other tin pots, gourds, and buffalo-bladders filled with pebbles, and uttering the strangest and most awful yells. In an instant the troop passed us, and dashed right through our fire and camp. They went over us like a tornado ; and our terrified horses, which had torn themselves loose, dashed over the prairie in front of them, trailing the broken lassos after them. Before we had seized our rifles, the Indians were so far off, that the bullets we sent after them produced no effect ; and we silently stared after them till they disappeared from sight over the last rising ground on the prairie. We asked each other with our eyes what was to be done ; but no one was yet able to speak : the fright and the heavy loss had fallen upon us too unexpectedly, and it was long ere we could think of the immediate future. At length all eyes were turned to me, as if I could help them. This confidence restored my power of speech ; and I told my companions in misfortune that I was able to lead them home without horses, and that Macdonnell's life was worth more than our animals.

I had hardly spoken to this effect, when Königstein shouted to me, and pointed in the direction where the horses had disappeared ; and, though it was so far off, I recognized Czar and the cream-color flying over the prairie, pursued by five Indians. I ran towards them as fast as my legs would carry me, and fired a bullet at the Indians, long out of range, but which they must have heard "pinging ;" for they gave up their pursuit, and merely fired a few harmless arrows after the horses, which now dashed up to

me, and stopped panting and snorting. Czar came up to me, and laid his head on my shoulders, while looking round in wild terror after his pursuers. I led him into camp, where both the horses were greeted with loud shouts of joy. We now held a grand council, and soon agreed to cache our baggage in a hollow néar at hand, cover it with turf, and then start for home on foot, in which, of course, we could only cover short distances: at the same time, we arranged that Mr. Lasar should ride the cream-color, and Mac Czar, while we also packed our food on the animals.

The whole day passed before we had cached our baggage, so that we slept another night at this inhospitable spot. The next morning we saddled and packed; and, after carefully taking the direction of the nearest tree with the compass, we began our wearisome journey. On reaching the tree, we blazed it with a knife, and then started for another, and so on, carefully marking each, so that we might be able to find our way back to our traps from tree to tree. The road to the San Saba Mountains, through the tall prairie-grass, was one of the unpleasantest I ever followed. There, however, the ground, though hilly and stony, was still adapted for human feet; and we soon grew accustomed to walking. Tiger had not a word to say for himself: he was revolving vengeance on the Lepans, who had stolen his faithful piebald, and swore that the Delawares should take many of their scalps in return.

After several weeks of unspeakable fatigue and privation, we at length arrived one evening at Widow White's, who received us with great cordiality and delight. We at once sent her son to the fort to fetch riding-horses for all of us, as we had had quite enough walking; and stopped the while with our kind hostess. Late the next evening, the long-looked-for horses arrived from the Leone: we let

them rest for the night, and on the next morning said good-by to the widow, and started for home, which we reached at an early hour, and found horses there for Lasar and his companions to carry them at once to Mustang River. The loss of Lasar's handsome horse and of John's mare again caused fresh sorrow in the family, with whom they had been favorites; but I willingly put up with the loss of my two horses and mules, and considered myself remarkably fortunate in recovering Czar and the cream-color. The last lesson which we gave the Mescaleros seemed to have had an intimidating effect on the Indians generally, as we neither saw nor heard any thing of them for several months.

Tiger, during this period, rode a splendid black horse of mine, which I had been always obliged to leave at home, as it was too timid and impetuous for hunting-purposes. Now that it was ridden daily, it became a first-rate horse; and Tiger often said that it was better than his piebald. Great was my surprise when Tiger knocked me up early one morning; and, on going out of my house, I saw the piebald quietly grazing. On waking, Tiger had found it tied up in front of his tent, and told me that the Lepans were frightened because his tribe would come in the autumn and learn their hostile behavior. With a sad look he remarked, that he would now be obliged to give me back the black horse, he supposed; and was quite beside himself with joy when I told him that I made him a present of it.

In the course of the summer, friendly Indians visited me, but never stopped long; and gave me to understand that I lived too much among the white men. It would be much better for me to move nearer to them, and then they would visit me more frequently. Thus arrived one evening, just before sunset, my old friend Pahajuka, accompanied by his good old squaw and his grand-daughter and a few Co-

manches. The joy of the old folk was great; and they said, that, had not the white men blocked the road to me, they would willingly stay some time with me; but, as it was, we were daily more separated. The people remained some weeks with me; but one morning they came into my room, and the old lady said with tears that this was the last visit they would pay me, as the road to me was growing too narrow. I was obliged to promise them a visit at the parts where the buffalo still grazed, and the antelopes and stags had not so many feet as here.

After breakfast, I saddled Czar, and rode with my guests to the mountain-springs, where we spent the night; and the next morning we took leave of one another. I promised to join them the next winter on the Puerco, when a great council of the Comanches was to take place. They often looked with tears in their eyes in the direction of the fort: then they offered me their hand once again, and rode off, never again to cross the threshold of my house, to which they were so attached.

Tiger, too, seemed dissatisfied at the new settlements, and could not understand how people could have an objection to his pulling down the fences, and riding across the fields to save distance. They had also forbidden him taking dry corn-leaves for his horse out of the stacks, or fastening his piebald to the grand stockade in front of the house while he went in to beg a drink of water. What I had long foreseen happened: he was beginning to feel the trammels of civilization, and wrestled against them, while its comforts still attracted him. Shortly after Pahajuka's departure, Tiger's tribe arrived in the neighborhood of the fort, and the chief paid me a visit with several of his warriors. He told me that Tiger wished to go home with them in order to see his relations, and return to me in the

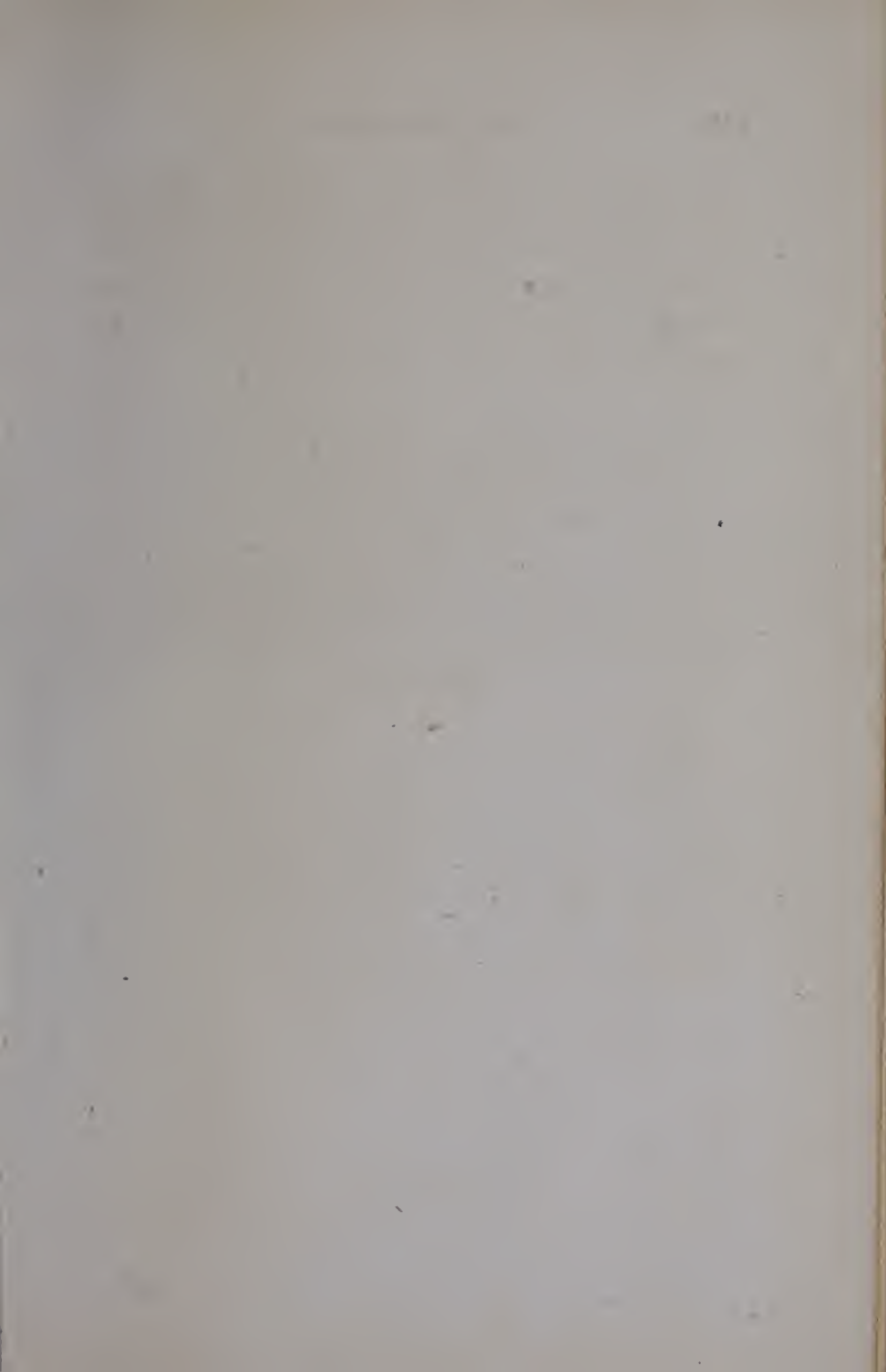
following spring. Though I felt sorry for it, I saw that he could not remain much longer in our settlement without parting from us on unfriendly terms: hence I offered no objection; and on the day of their departure I accompanied them as far as Widow White's, as I wanted to pay a visit to Mac on Mustang River. I took a hearty farewell of Tiger, as I was really attached to him; and he was obliged to promise me a visit ere long.

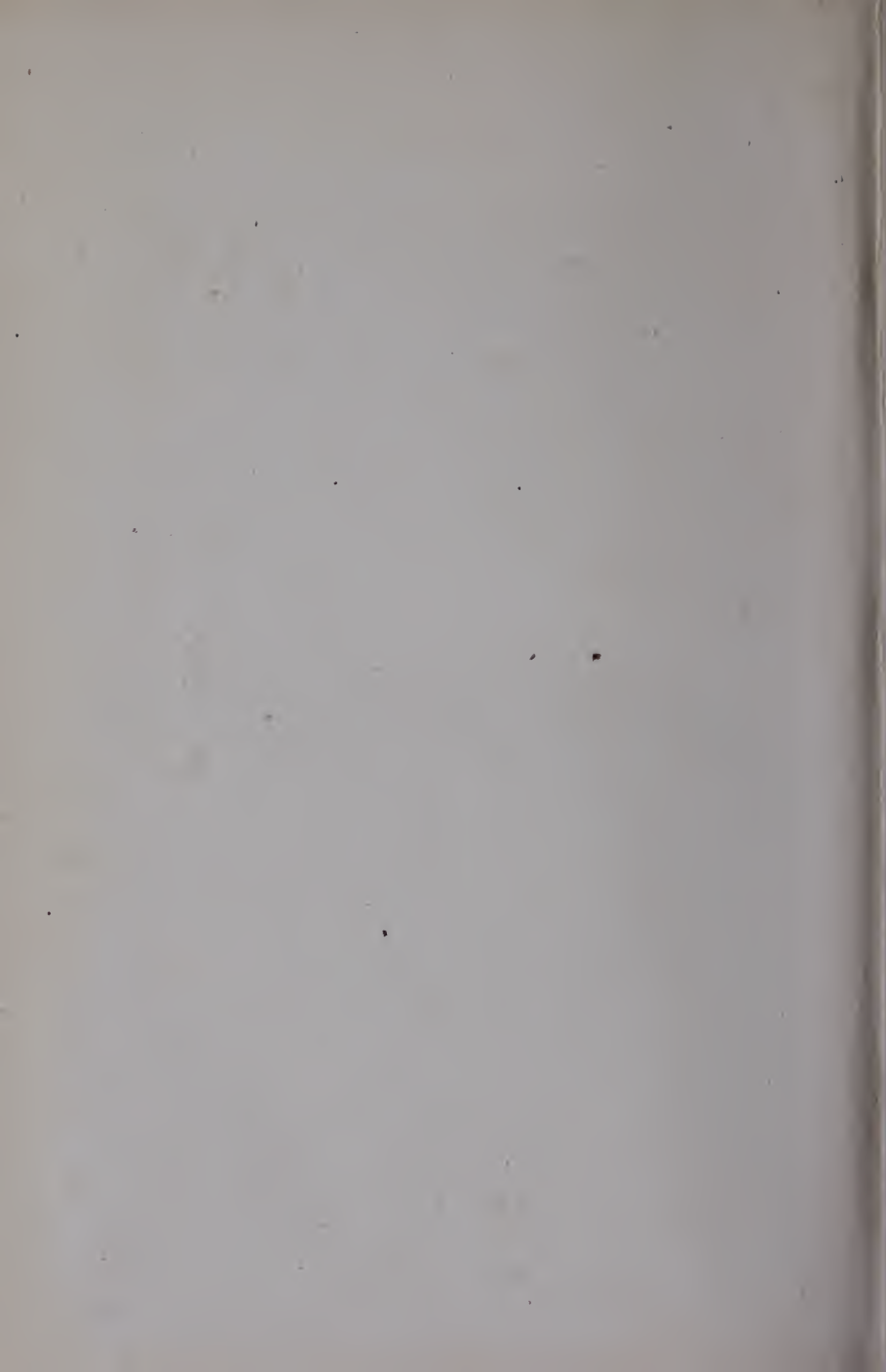
The next day I rode to Macdonnell's, when I found every thing prospering. His field had produced a rich maize crop, and was now covered with beans, potatoes, melons, gourds, &c. His orchard already contained fine young trees: his garden supplied him and his negroes with magnificent vegetables. The yard round his house was crowded with poultry of every description, and the interior of his block-house was very neat and tidy. A large new patchwork quilt was thrown on his bed: over the mantle-piece was a handsome looking-glass; and by its side hung the framed portraits of three men, which are very frequently found in frontier-houses, and by which the Americans do not pay themselves the worst compliment. They represent the greatest, the best, and the most useful men of our century, — Washington, Alexander von Humboldt, and Liebig.

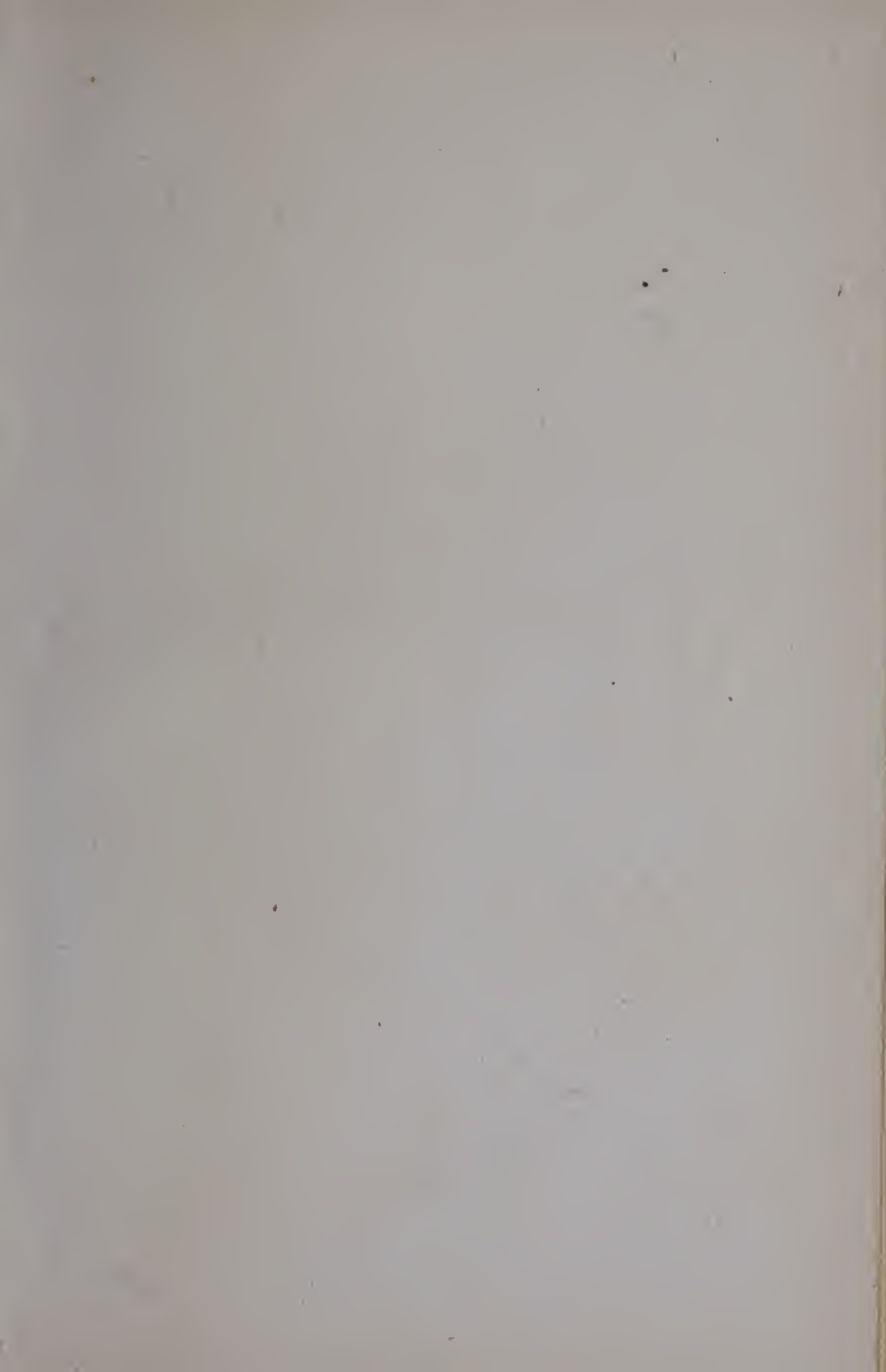
The now frequently traversed road from Turkey Creek to the Leone shortened the distance between the two rivers much, as the greater portion of it could be galloped over. I reached the fort again at an early hour, and helped Königstein in his preparations for a start on the next morning. He was going with Antonio, Lambert, and several pack animals, to fetch our saddles and traps, which we cached, after the loss of our cattle in the prairie, to the north of the San Saba Mountains.

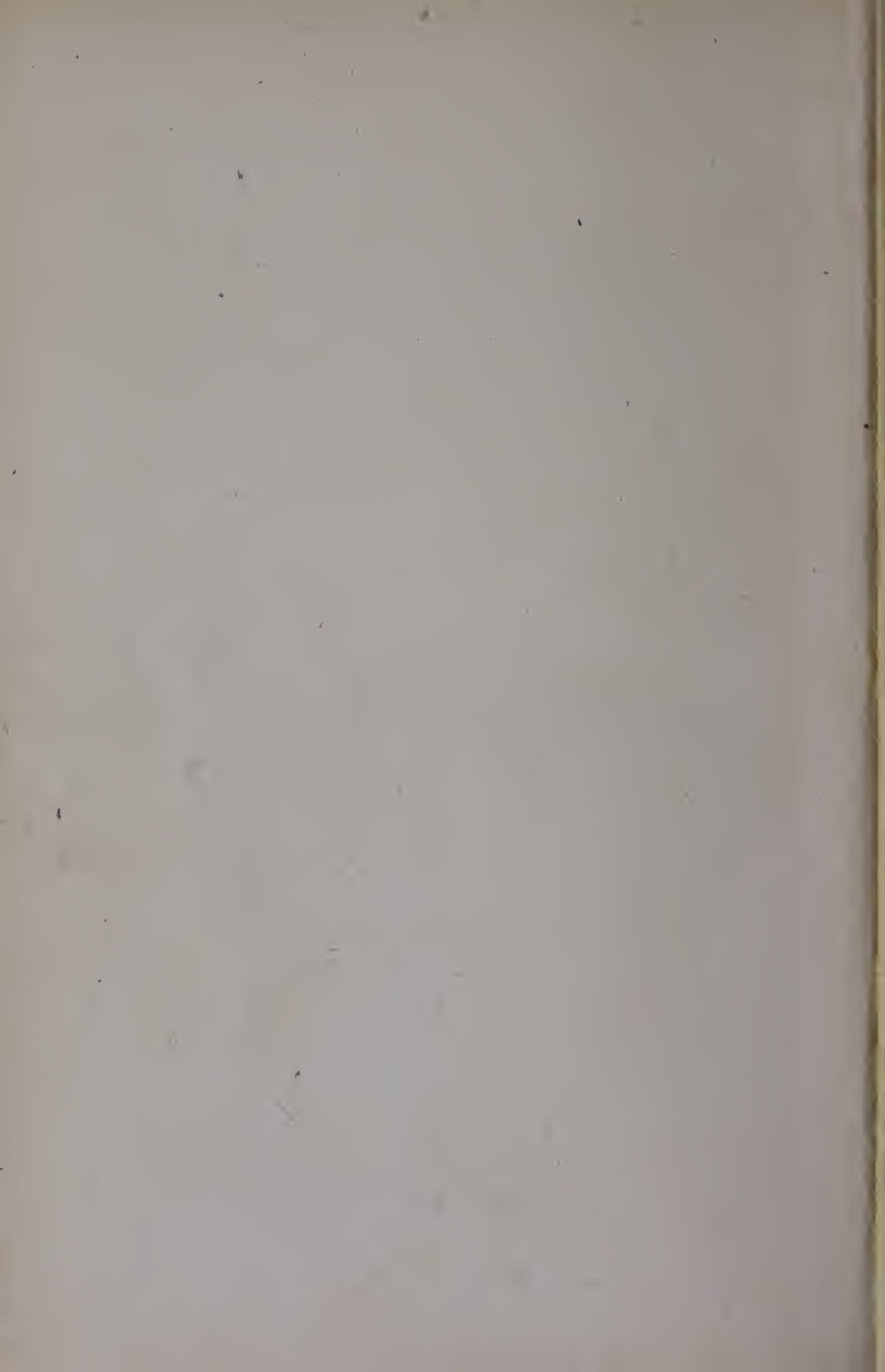
Although we are still living on the frontier of the desert, we have now, in front of us, a line of settlements facing the Indians, which keep off us the ordinary dangers of a frontier life ; and we are rarely reminded, by the personal appearance of these savages in our vicinity, that their hunting-grounds are not a great distance from us.

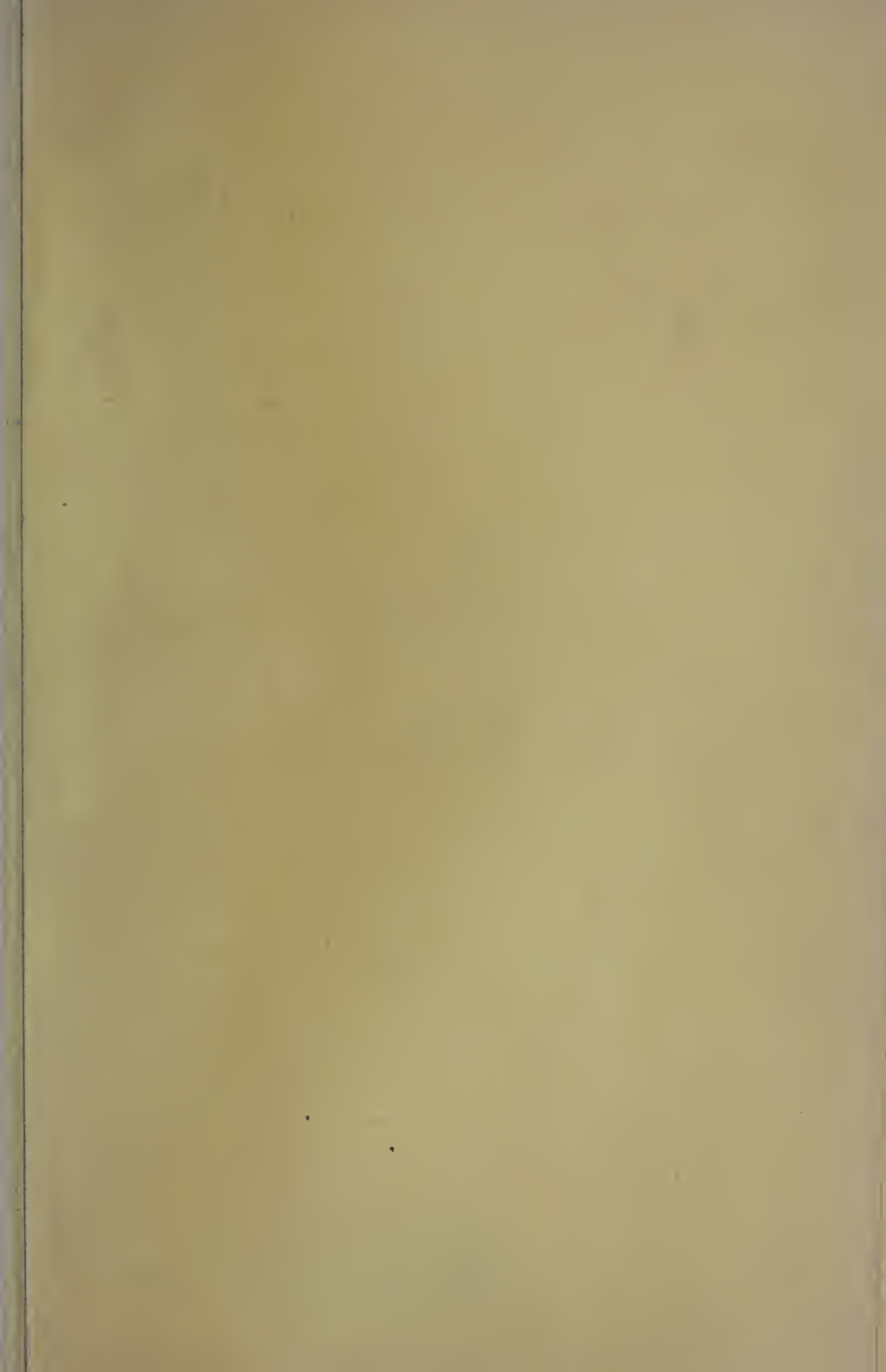
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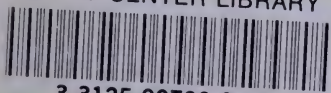




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